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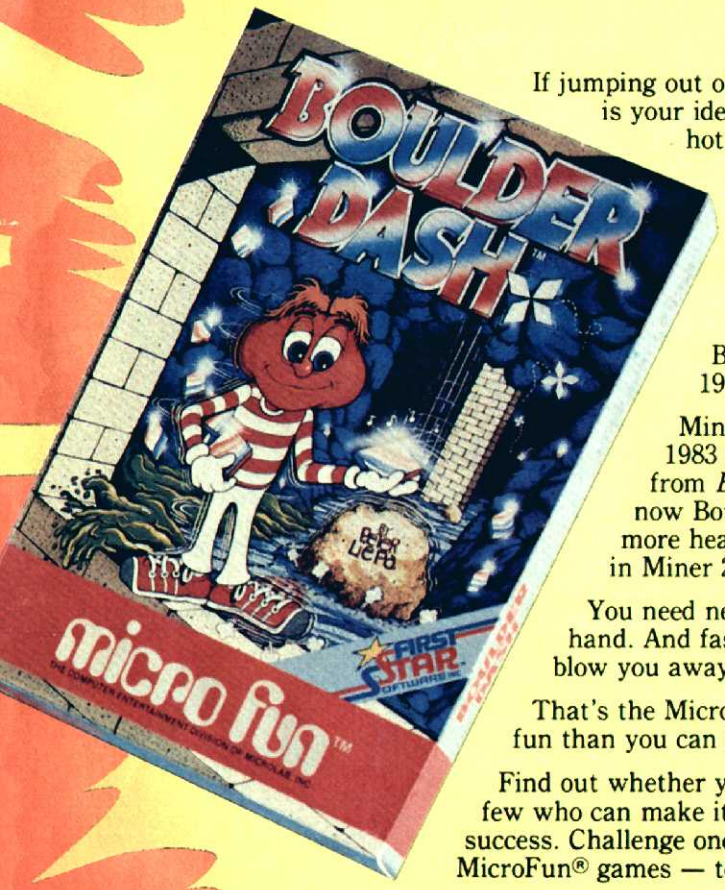
Explosive entertainment



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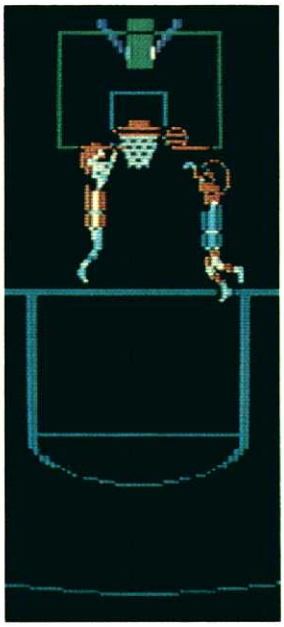

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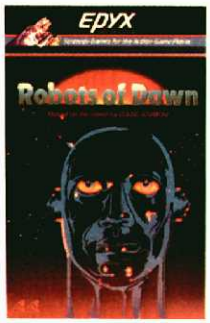

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By ARNIE KATZ

Confessions of a Glitch Buster

Everything's quiet here at Electro General Hospital. The doctors have gone home, and even Game Nurse Angela has called it a day after doling out my evening sleeping pill. "Rest!" she ordered, as she gazed sympathetically at my once-robust form stretched out on the hospital bed.

How'd I become an inmate of this home for blast brigade burn-outs? It all began so innocently. . .

". . .And you just gotta see it," the voice burbled at me over the phone. He was so excited I could hardly understand the individual words. The meaning, however, was clear: This was one glitch I had to bust personally.

My pen raced as he spewed out instructions. "That's it," he said as I finished off the third page of notes. "Easy, huh?"

"Yeah," I said. "Easy."

The afternoon dragged like a lame pony. Finally, I seated myself at my home computer station and prepared to stalk the Ultimate Glitch.

Learning to roll the score before losing even one "life" took a mere 12 hours of nonstop arcading. By the end of the week, I'd discovered the precise moment at which to rap the disk drive with the hammer. It was comparative child's play to lose all seven lives without scoring a single point.

I could almost hear victory trumpets when the playfield dissolved to be replaced by a text screen. After positioning a mirror so I could read by its reflection, I found it said:

"Congratulations! You have
passed the first test.
You are now ready to
confront
THE ULTIMATE GLITCH"

Heart in mouth, I hit the "return" key. More text filled the display. I was on my way. . .

Frankly, the fine details have grown vague, wiped clean by a mixture of total exhaustion and the Game Doctor's smart-bomb therapy (still legal in New York State). I remember buying a dog whistle and then calling the serial number on my game-disk, and I think I took the bus to Corvallis, Oregon, but I can't be sure. You know, I can still taste that disk. Hopefully, publishers will someday cater to glitch busters by encasing their disks in better-tasting cardboard jackets.

It must've gone on like that for weeks, even months. Time lost all meaning as I crisscrossed the country, digging up caches of documentation and making enigmatic — even to me — calls to out-of-the-way electronic message boards. If *EG* hadn't printed plans for a left-handed joystick, I might never have completed my quest.

But I did. And when the screen lit up, well, it was almost worth it. Folks say every life has three important moments: When you're born, when you get married, and when you die. Seeing this glitch makes it four.

I'd love to be able to tell you about it, but my memories are already disjointed. I can recall at least the gist of the message from space, and the striptease show has also stuck in my mind, but other specifics are gone forever.

All I know for sure is that a bunch of *EG* staffers found me slumped over the computer. They brought me here. From now on, send your glitches to Tracie Forman. She's still young and healthy enough to stand the strain.

Volume Two, Number Seventeen
December, 1984

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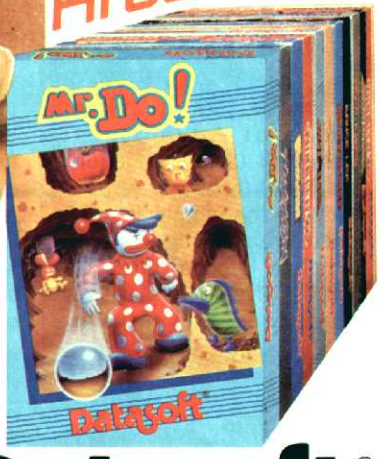

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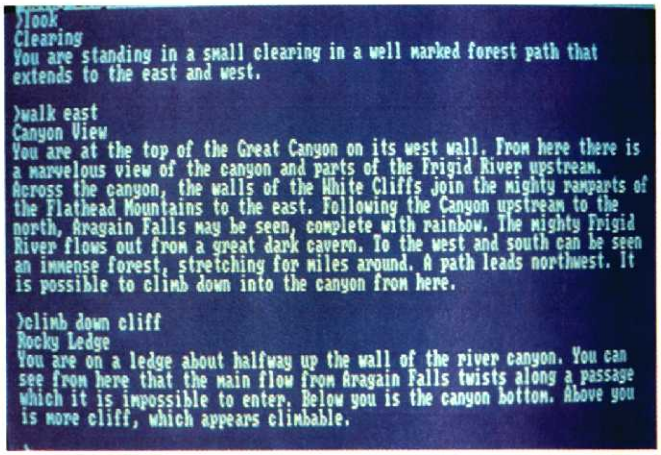
HOTLINE

CONSUMER BEAT

A new line of games from Sierra, co-developed by Walt Disney Communications, will feature Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy, Winnie the Pooh, and Ludwig Von Drake. . .Scarborough Systems is packaging Atari and Commodore 64 formats in one box, to make it easier for retailers to stock the Scarborough product line. Tom Snyder's business strategy game **Run For the Money** is the first entertainment product in the dual-pack, but Scarborough plans to use the combined format for all future titles the firm develops for Atari and C-64 computers. . . Infocom's **Four-In-One Sampler,** for about $8, includes a tutorial on interactive fiction, plus excerpts from four Infocom game genres: **The Witness** (Murder/Mystery), **Infidel** (Tales of Adventure), **Planetfall** (Science Fiction) and **Zork I** (Fantasy). Also included in the Sampler is an $8 rebate coupon good for any complete Infocom title. The sampler gives new players a chance to try each of the Infocom game genres before actually purchasing a full-length title, for Apple, Atari, C-64, and IBM. . . NEC Home Electronics (USA) has donated 100 PC-8200 notebook-sized portable computers, and five PC-8800 desktop systems to five universities. The schools receiving the equipment were MIT, UCLA, Univ. of Illinois, Univ. of Utah, and Univ. of Maryland. Each school received 20 notebook computers, 20 32K RAM external memory cartridges, 40 8K RAM chips, 20 AC adaptors, serial cable, and 20 parallel printer cables, a text-editing program, TELCOM telecommunications software, and software, as well as dual disk drive, monitor and printer. . . Searchmart Corp., North Palm Beach, Fl., has put its free-access Software Library on-line. Anyone with data communications capability (telephone and modem-equipped computer set for 8 bits, 1 stop bit, no parity) can dial 305-845-6466 to log onto this software locator service that gives descriptions, prices and other details about thousands of software products. The library is maintained by software manufacturers and vendors, to deliver timely advertising messages direct to end users . . .Huttonline, the computer on-line service from E.F. Hutton, now features a stock quote service, at no extra charge. The service provides the day's high, low and closing price, trading volume, last sale, and net change for all listed securities and options and NASDAQ stocks. . .

PLANETFALL (INFOCOM)


>look
Clearing
You are standing in a small clearing in a well marked forest path that extends to the east and west.
>walk east
Canyon View
You are at the top of the Great Canyon on its west wall. From here there is a marvelous view of the canyon and parts of the Frigid River upstream. Across the canyon, the walls of the White Cliffs join the mighty ramparts of the Flathead Mountains to the east. Following the Canyon upstream to the north, Aragain Falls may be seen, complete with rainbow. The mighty Frigid River flows out from a great dark cavern. To the west and south can be seen an immense forest, stretching for miles around. A path leads northwest. It is possible to climb down into the canyon from here.
>climb down cliff
Rocky Ledge
You are on a ledge about halfway up the wall of the river canyon. You can see from here that the main flow from Aragain Falls twists along a passage which it is impossible to enter. Below you is the canyon bottom. Above you is more cliff, which appears climbable.
ZORK I (INFOCOM)

ZORK TRILOGY (INFOCOM)

COIN-OP BEAT

Gaplus, from Bally-Midway, is a save-mankind thriller that casts the player against an onslaught of killer insects from outer space. To swat these cosmic flies the player can use the Phalanx Attack, the Hyper Attack, and the Cyclone Attack. Bonus rounds feature a ship from the Queen of the Gaplus, and a Tofu Attack, in which a ghost transforms into deadly bean curd — one 'whey' for earth's defender to gain double or triple scores. . .Williams Electronics' latest wowser for pinball wizards is **Star Light,** now cashing in on the back-to-basics movement in game

STAR LIGHT (WILLIAMS)

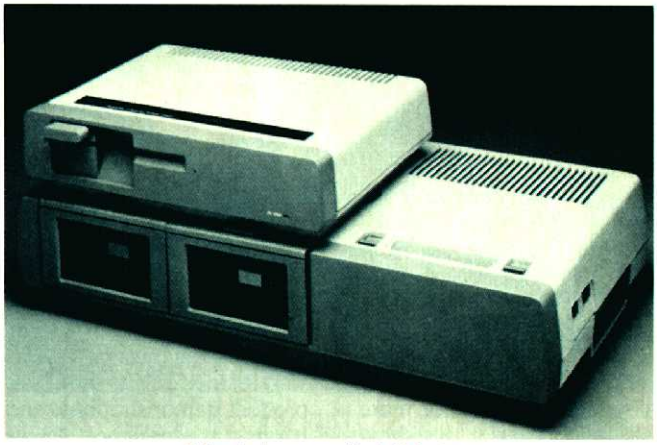
HYPERSPORTS (CENTURI)

parlors. A lane-change feature is activated by a separate button, and making rollover lanes and buttons causes stars to light, until a constellation appears after all ten stars are turned on. . .**Hyper Sports,** by Konami/Centuri, the sequel to **Track & Field,** has seven new events, including Skeet Shooting, Long Horse Vault, Swimming, Archery, Pole Vault, Weight Lifting, and Triple Jump. Coin-oppers can play solitaire, or up to 4 can compete. . .Konami is "committed to an ongoing, nationwide investigation and enforcement of copyrights and trademarks". The company is prosecuting infringers who counterfeit, pirate, or otherwise infringe on its game. . .

'Skeet Shooting' (L) 'Triple Jump' from Centuri's *HyperSports.*

HARDWARE BEAT

The latest member of the IBM family is the PC AT, in two modes and prices. The $4000 unit includes 256K memory, with the company's new high-capacity diskette drive. The $5,800 unit has 512K, the new disk drive, and a fixed-disk drive. . .Coleco's newest hardware introduction for the Adam includes an auxiliary Digital Data Drive, so that users can store up to 512K using two digital data packs. . .Coleco's disk drive for the Adam takes single-sided, double-density 5¼" floppy disks that can handle up to 160K bytes. . . Flexidraw, by Inkwell Systems, is a light pen that allows computerists to draw freehand on screen. It includes software with features like line, box, circle, sketch, shade, erase, grid, zoom, crosshairs, text, rubber band. Over 248 pattern choices available; lets users paint drawings in two sizes, using two separate work screens. Preprogrammed templates help C-64'ers produce electronic schematics, architectural floorplans, musical compositions, and scientific equations. $150 in most computer stores. . .Okidata's new Okimate 10 Color Printer can handle over 40 shades, using color and black ribbons in "clean hands" cartridges. It prints at 240 words per minute, letter quality, in four character sizes. All kinds of paper works, either plain or thermal, computer or single sheets. There's an indicator to show when it's out of paper or out of ribbon. Comes with software to teach new owners how to use it, all for $238, including the cables needed to connect it to the computer . . .K-Tel's new line of K-TEL/BASF Floppy Diskettes are packaged in two- and ten-packs, shrink-wrapped for easy display. . .Applied Systems & Products, Santa Ana, Ca., has a Universal Modem Adapter ($14.95) for VIC-20 and C-64 computers. It requires no modification to either the phone or modem, and needs no additional hardware.



Adam's long-awaited disk drive.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS & COMPUTER EXPO: Nov. 1-4, Nassau Coliseum, Long Island, N.Y. A pre-Christmas software and hardware show that's open to the public. Call 526-293-5533 for more information.

THE CLOVERLEAF MALL COMPUTER SHOW; Nov. 8-11, Cloverleaf Mall, Midlothian Turnpike & Route 150, Richmond, VA. This exhibition of computer products is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 9:30 pm (noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday). For information call 804-359-4466.

MANASSAS MALL COMPUTER SHOW; Nov. 29-Dec. 2, Manassas Mall, 8300 Sudley Road, Manassas, VA. The public exhibition is open 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. (noon to 5 on Sunday). Call 804-359-4466 for information.

NEW YORK COMPUTER SHOW & SOFTWARE EXPO; April 25-28, 1985, Nassau

HOTLINE

County Coliseum, Long Island, NY. Write to CompuShows, Box 3315, Annapolis, MD 21403.

VIRGINIA COMPUTER SHOW & SOFTWARE EXPO; April 25-28, 1985, Pavilion, Virginia Beach, VA. Write to CompuShows, address above.

INTERNATIONAL SOFTWARE UPDATE; Feb. 16-20, 1985, Waiohai Resort Hotel, Kauai, Hawaii. For information, contact Raging Bear Productions, 21 Tamal Vista Dr. #175, Corte Madera, CA 94925, or call 415-924-1194.

MARYLAND COMPUTER SHOW & SOFTWARE EXPO; March 22-24, 1985, Convention Center, Baltimore MD. Write to CompuShows, address above.

NYC PERSONAL COMPUTER SHOW #5, March 29-31; Madison Square Garden, New York City. Open to the public, the show features exhibits of hardware and software. Write Ken Gordon Productions, PO Box 13, Franklin Park, NJ 08823, or call 201-297-2526 for information.

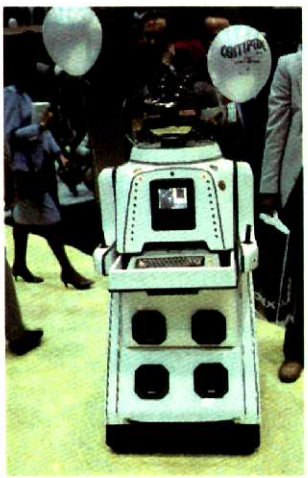
INTERNATIONAL PERSONAL ROBOT CONGRESS & EXPO; May 15-19, 1985, Albuquerque, NM. For more information about this show for robot enthusiasts, write Robotic Industries Assn., P.O. Box 1366, Dearborn, MI 48121, or call 313-271-7800.

BITS & BYTES SHOW. Nov. 30-Dec. 2, Disneyland convention Center, Anaheim, CA. This is especially for kids, but parents should like it too. Top educators and industry professionals will present sessions, while young people get a chance to look at the latest computer products. There's a hands-on demonstration area for attendees. Contact Information Processing Group, 87 N. Raymond Ave., Suite 305, Pasadena, CA 91103, or call 818-792-5111 for more information.

MILITARY CIRCLE MALL COMPUTER SHOW; Dec. 5-8, Military Circle Mall, Military Hwy. & Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk, VA. This public show is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Call 804-359-4466 for further information.

SOUTHEAST COMPUTER SHOW & SOFTWARE EXPO; Dec. 13-16, Civic Center, Atlanta, GA. Write to CompuShows, Box 3315, Annapolis, MD 21403, or call 800-368-2066 for info about this public show.

COMPU-CRUISE, Dec. 15-22. This computer conference at sea sails to the Western Caribbean. The 7-day event features several computer rooms, instructive seminars, product demonstrations, and hands-on experience. Prices for the cruise aboard the MS Nieuw Amsterdam of the Holland American Cruise Lines start at $1195, including all meals, accommodations, entertainment, and round-trip air fare from 80 U.S. gateway cities. Write Compu-Cruise, 1500 Valley River Dr., Suite 315, Engene, OR 97401, or call 503-341-1032 for more information.



THE BRITISH ARE COMING! THE BRITISH ARE COMING!

This year the English Invasion began in force in the computer game field, as game designers from Over There explore the market for their brand of entertainment on this side of the Atlantic. The latest arrival from England is Mastertronic, Inc., now establishing headquarters in Van Nuys, CA.

Mastertronic's specialty is budget-priced entertainment software. Games on disk for the C-64 will retail for $8.99. The company currently has about 20 games wowing them in England and Europe.

One of the first titles to hit these shores is **Chiller,** loosely based on rock videos and horror shows. The 10-screen arcade-style action game partially involves the rescue of a fair damsel from distress. Other forthcoming titles include **Candidate,** based on America's presidential election, and **Duck Shoot,** a carnival shooting gallery.

Sidney Nieckerk, president of the new American firm, and Martin Alper, from Mastronic, Ltd. of England, plan to market 14 titles in the USA before the end of this year.

JUNIOR GETS A NEW SET OF KEYS

IBM unveiled enhancements for the IBM-PCjr which the company hopes will make the computer a hot seller for the home market. As soon as existing supplies of the flat-keyboard machine are depleted, Junior is scheduled for a new typewriter-style keyboard, said to be a smaller version of the senior PC keyboard. Current PCjr owners will receive the new keyboard free, without any additional purchases required, direct from IBM.

IBM also announced expansion options that increase Jr's memory to 256K, so it can run business-oriented software.

IBM PCjr with original keyboard.

MOST LARGE COMPANIES NOW USE COMPUTERS

The latest research by TALMIS shows that the larger the company, the more likely it is to use computers — in fact, 74% of all companies with 500 or more employees use personal business computers. Overall, the tally is at two-thirds saturation regardless of size, and the number is expected to increase by 11% this year.

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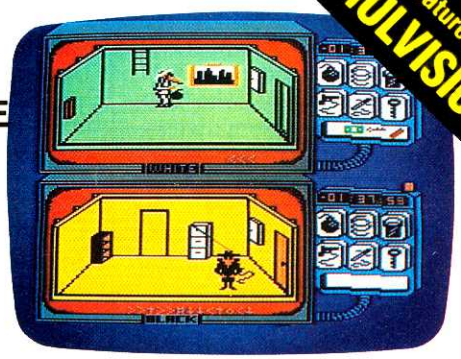

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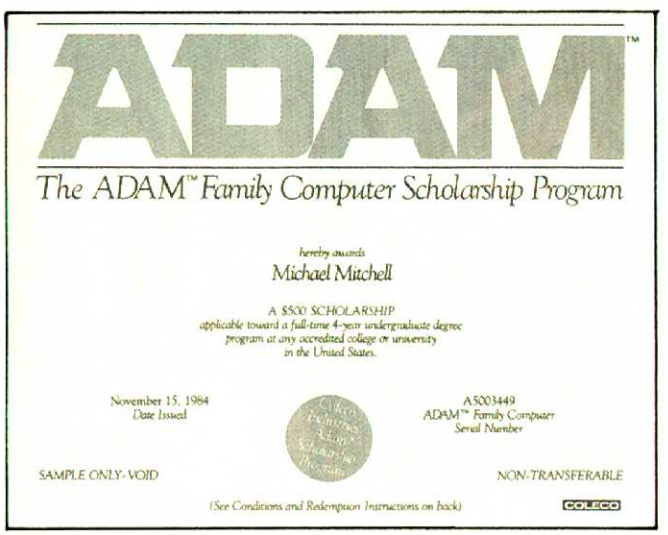
HOTLINE

MUSEUM SEEKS COMPUTER ARTISTS

The Bronx Museum of the Arts plans a special exhibition of work by artists who use computers as expressive tools, and is inviting entries of such work as computer graphics, computer animation, sound installations and audio art. The Museum wants to receive only duplicates; it will not assume responsibility for original work.

Send submissions, accompanied by a SASE, to Computer Graphics Exhibition, Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040

Grand Concourse, Bronx, New York 10456, or call 212-681-6000 for more information. The deadline for consideration is December 20, 1984.



ADAM, COLECOVISION BUYERS GET FREE SCHOLARSHIPS, CABBAGE PATCH KIDS

There's something extra in store for anyone who buys either an Adam computer system or a ColecoVision before December 31, 1984 — financial aid for college, or a free Cabbage patch doll.

There's scholarship money for anyone who buys a Coleco Adam Family Computer, or the Adam Expansion Module between Sept. 1 and Dec. 31, 1984. Coleco will provide $500 to the purchaser's child, payable in four equal payments following the satisfactory completion of each academic year. The student must be under 18 on Sept. 1, 1985, and must enroll as a full-time student in a 4-year undergraduate degree program at an accredited U.S. college or university before his or her 19th birthday.

In another offer designed to please youthful gamers, Coleco promises a Cabbage Patch Kid to anyone who buys a ColecoVision before Dec. 31. Send in the proof of purchase before November 15, and the company promises delivery before Christmas.

A DOZEN COMPU-WIZARDS WIN PROGRAMMING CONTEST

Twelve computerists won computers and supplies in the computer Edgame Challenge sponsored by Verbatim Corp, and Scholastic, Inc. Each of the dozen finalists received an Atari 800XL Computer, Atari 1050 disk drive, an Amdek Color-1 Plus monitor, and a supply of Datalife disks, for a total value of over $1000 per winner.

The contest was for educational software programs, in six categories: Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Health/Nutrition/Geography/Social Studies, and Miscellaneous. Programs were submitted in two divisions, Elementary (kindergarten through 8th grade) and Secondary (9th through 12th grade). The 12 winning programs are being reviewed for possible publication and distribution on a non-profit basis to schools and individuals.

WINNERS

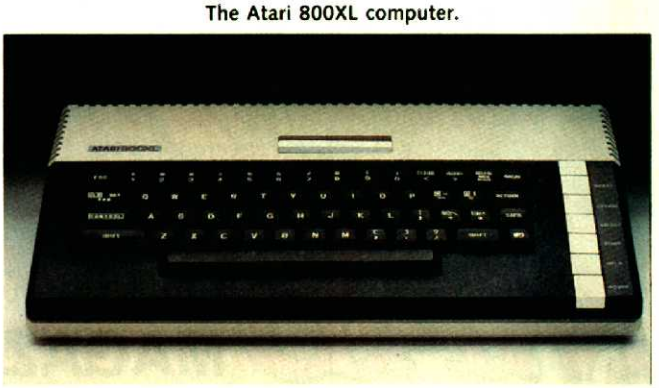
Elementary

John Grozik Language Arts Milwaukee, WI	Kim Rouleau/Scott Quin Geo/Social Science Mauldin, SC	Cara Reilly Health/Nutrition Mineral City, OH
Gilbert Bertrand Miscellaneous Quebec, CAN	Shane Yamkowy Sciences Peace River, CAN	Ann McBain Ezzell Mathematics Birmingham, MI

Secondary

John Lipp Miscellaneous Tucson, AZ	Christopher Smolen Language Arts Voorheesville, NY	Victor T. Albino Science Woodinville, WA
Jack B. Eastman Geo/Social Science Janesville, WI	Robert N. Ronau Mathematics Canton, OH	

The Atari 800XL computer.



WHAT'S HOT

Everybody's playing trivia games this winter, and some of the best are on computer! **Trivia Fever** (Professional Software/Apple, C-64, IBM-PC, PCjr, TRS-80) has three skill levels, so experts can be handicapped. The game can also be played without the computer, using the question cards that come with it. **Trivia Mania** (Dynacomp/C-64, IBM) has 6000 questions in six categories, for up to six players/teams to compete. **PQ - The Party Quiz Game** (Suncom/Apple, Atari, C-64, IBM-PC) uses special Quick Response controllers that come with the game, then connect to the computer with 6 ft. cables, so players don't have to hug the console to play. Daystar's **Factactics** (Apple, Atari, C-64, IBM-PC, PCjr) has both a straight fact-test and a tactics-plus-facts challenge combining trivia with an on-screen board game. Cymbal Software's **Master Trivia** (C-64) is for 4-6 players/teams, who select

PQ-THE PARTY QUIZ GAME (SUNCOM)

category, time limit and scoring objective. The game integrates with five additional trivia collections from the same publisher. **Flash Facts Trivia,** from Coleco (Adam) combines with the Electronic Flashcard Maker to produce questions from 23 flashcard decks. **The Trivia Arcade** (Screenplay/Apple, Atari, C-64, IBM-PC, PCjr) combines action competition with trivia, as up to four players vie to capture symbols representing various categories, then reply to one of 3000-plus questions. Players choose multiple choice answers, or input their own; they can also opt whether to see the correct answer or not when a wrong response is entered. A great way to spend winter evenings.

PRIDE ELECTRONICS BUYS AMIGA POWER-STICKS

Amiga's line of Power-Stick joysticks has been purchased by Pride Electronics of Salt Lake City. Pride is the manufacturer of the line, and will now take over the marketing and sales as well.

According to Amiga's Director of Marketing, Don Reisinger, the impact of the sale at the consumer level should be minimal. The joysticks will carry the old Amiga moniker until existing supplies are depleted, after which new inventories will be under the Pride label.

TIMEWORKS GIVES DISKS FOR CASSETTES

Timeworks has a good deal for C-64 owners who're converting to disk drives. The company will change any Timeworks cassette to disk. Just mail the Timeworks cassette, along with $4 handling charge, to Timeworks, 444 Lake Cook Road, Deerfield, IL 60015, and the company will make the trade. "This is part of our continuing policy of making it easy for our customers to upgrade their personal computer software programs as they upgrade their equipment," explained Mark Goldberg, president of the software manufacturing firm.

COLOR PRINTERS WILL BE BIG BIZ IN 10 YEARS

The market for color printers is expected to multiply drastically in the next decade, according to predictions by International Resource Development, a market research firm. Currently there are about $750 million in color printer sales per year, but this figure is expected to top 4 billion by 1993. IRD credited the widespread adoption of color monitors and color-capable software for this burgeoning growth.

SWEET SMELL OF SOFTWARE

Here's a first! Peachtree Software is adding to the fragrance of — what else? — peaches to its advertising and product brochures. The scented ads have appeared in magazines and are included in all Peachtree packages.

SOFTWARE BEAT

Put your dancing sneakers on; Creative Software's **Break Street** (C-64) will get your toes to tapping! Players use keyboard or joystick to manipulate a breakdancer in a neighborhood gang battle of the hoofers, as dueling dancers strut their stuff. . .Magnetic Harvest has an ecological game/simulation that puts players in command of a satellite with multiple seasons, climates, weather, varied geography, and vegetation. **Planetmaster** (Apple) lets the computerist populate the world with animals, then monitor their life spans, interaction, diets, and life-support requirements. . .Lead Pack Software's **Marathon** (Apple, IBM-PC, PCjr) is for armchair runners. Gamers make tactical decisions, evaluating their own position, pace and endurance rating. Features multiple viewing angles through the 26.2 mile race, and a marathon scoreboard with time splits, position and race pace after every mile. . . . **Danger — High Surf,** developed by Hang Ten International (Softie/Apple, Atari, C-64, IBM) has 3-dimensional animation, with waves, mermaids and sharks, for a total surfing experience for landlubbers. . .**Lode Runner** (Broderbund/Most systems) has been reprogrammed for the Macintosh. The award-winning game has been redesigned to take advantage of the Mac's capabilities, and players control the runner with keyboard or mouse. . . Hayden Software's **Sargon III** recently defeated a chess master rated at over 2200, in a U.S. Chess Federation Tournament, the most highly rated human opponent ever bested by a computer chess program. *Sargon III* is now available for Apple, C-64, and IBM-PC.

LODE RUNNER (BRODERBUND)

TEEN WINS DINO EGGS SWEEPSTAKES

Bill Braun, a 13-year-old from Oceanside, N.Y. is the winner of the first Micro Fun "Live Your Game" sweepstakes. Since the contest was themed to Micro Fun's popular **Dino Eggs** computer game, the centerpiece of the grand prize is an all-expenses paid trip to Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, including a chance to get behind the scenes for a special lunch with the museum's dinosaur experts.

The four-day/three-night trip includes such trimmings as $300 in pocket money, a limousine to take Bill to and from the airport, a sightseeing tour and a visit to the offices of Micro Fun.

Bill Braun accepts congratulations from Micro Fun's Susan Goldberg.

HOTLINE

HAYES GETS NEW NAME

Hayes Products, San Marcos, CA, is changing its name to CH Products. The company manufacturers the Micro-Trak Trackball, Paddlesticks, and MACH II and MACH III

joysticks which feature spring centering, slide-switch spring disconnect, rotary electrical trims, plus two fire buttons, for the Apple, IBM-PC, PCjr, and TRS-80 Color Computer. The company changed its name in order to avoid confusion with Hayes Microcomputer Products of Atlanta, GA.

ROCK-OLA DONATES EYES

Rock-Ola Industries' coin-op game **Eyes** is helping pediatric patients in Mount Sinai Hospital, Chicago, Ill., by "increasing socialization among adolescents, doctors and patients, and creating more overall interest in group activities." This is according to Marcia Powell, Child Life Specialists of Mt. Sinai, in her letter to Rock-Ola Industries, expressing appreciation for the donation of the game.

Ms. Powell went to say, "It is rare that individuals contributing equipment like *Eyes* really know the full impact their donation has on the children and their families. It is impossible to measure the long-range effect *Eyes* will have on the patients. The short-term effects, however, are extremely positive. *Eyes* works almost ten hours a day, delighting children and cheering them up."

BITS & BYTES SCALED TO SUIT COMPUKIDDIES

The first computer convention especially for kids, Bits & Bytes, convenes Nov. 30-Dec. 2, 1984, at the Disneyland Convention Center, Anaheim, CA. The theme of the show, billed as "the nation's first interactive computer experience for kids", is "Commitment to the New Generation." The show features exhibits of the latest computer products for home and school, seminars, panel discussions, hands-on demonstrations, and a Whiz Kid panel.

Special programs will be devoted to educators, (with workshops on curricula and courseware developments); young people, (emphasizing computer literacy, systems orientation, software development, career opportunities and workshops); parents (education in home and school, plus computer literacy and networking for parents), and an industry roundtable (discussions of issues and strategies for the educational software market).

The exhibit runs from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. (5 p.m. on Sunday). Admission fees are $7.50 for adults, $3.50 for students and children.

BOOT ME UP TO THE BALLGAME

Did you think the only game played at Shea Stadium between two New York teams would be between the Mets and Yankees in a battle for a World Series title? But then would Wayne Garrett and Hubie Brooks both play third base in separate half innings? Impossible! But "The Magic is Back" at Shea, with the help of the ITTXtra computer that manager Davey Johnson uses to compare statistics. "Abner Doubledata" was officially named in a special ceremony between a doubleheader on August 31.

To highlight the event, a 20-minute game between the world series winning team of

1969 challenged the present pennant contenders to a game screened on Diamond Vision. Although honorary manager Ed Kranepool and clean-up batter Art Shamsk both hit two-run homers for the 1969 team, the 1984 team won in an exciting bottom of the ninth inning Rookie sensation Dwight Gooden struck out nine.

The evening was sponsored by Computerland, ITTXtra, and Micro League Baseball. Matthew Carlton won an identical computer for naming Abner.

ENTERTAINMENT BEAT

The Activision Pencil (Activision/C-64) lets the computerist use keyboard or joystick to create extravaganzas, either freehand or by using up to 75 graphic and musical commands. . . K-tel Software's **Plantin' Pal** (Apple, C-64, IBM-PC, PCjr) is for home gardeners. Contains all the facts for raising vegetable, even helps create layout and design for the plot, and customizes the garden for the part of the country where you live. . . **Peanuts Maze Marathon** (Random House/Apple) is for kids 4-8. The computer, with help from Snoopy, Charlie Brown, Lucy and others, generates random mazes for the child to guide the Peanut characters through. Successfully completing the course produces an animated scene. . . Coleco's **Smurf Paint & Play Workshop** (Adam/Colecovision) is an electronic cartoon show and paint set featuring Smurf characters. Kids place props (furniture, plants, trees, etc.) onto prepared background scenes (or create their own) and paint the characters. Record the movements of up to four Smurfs, then play it back to musical accompaniment. . .

SMURF PAINT 'N' PLAY (COLECO)

ATARI TO DESIGN NEW COMPUTERS

Atari plans to produce several high-powered new computers in the next year, including 8-, 16-, and 32-bit microprocessors. Company spokesmen indicate that plans are afoot for machines with twice and four times the power of the current 8-bit 800XL computer.

This move would put Atari into competition with the 16-bit IBM-PC, and the 32-bit Apple Macintosh. Up until now, Atari has not manufactured computers in this class.

The company will continue manufacturing the Atari 800XL, which is now positioned as a "family computer".

Since taking over the company on July 2, 1984, Jack Tramiel, Chairman of the Board of Atari, has retrenched the company, paring the design and engineering staff of roughly 1100 to 200 at its Sunnyvale, CA headquarters. Remarking on his plans for 1985, Mr. Tramiel said, "I will present to the world the new Atari Corporation." He then went on to express his confidence in the future of his new company: "I am confident that with this bright new image and expanded product offering, Atari Corp.'s first year sales will exceed even the peak performance levels of my former life." Mr. Tramiel, founder and former president of Commodore said, "All of my corporation's human, creative, engineering and manufacturing resources are extending all energies toward world leadership in these product categories in 1985."

BRADLEY, HASBRO MERGE

In a marriage of toy giants, Milton Bradley Company has merged into Hasbro Industries. The new combined company will be called Hasbro Bradley, Inc.

Hasbro is a leader in the manufacture of non-electronic toys and games. Milton Bradley, one of the most famous American game manufacturers, has a small electronics division that makes some computer software, mostly in the educational field.

Two Well-Kept Secrets That Every 5200™ Owner Should Know About

"A must for all 5200™ owners"—**Joystick Jolter—March, 1984**

"With the Masterplay 5200™ Interface nothing will stand between you and the ultimate enjoyment of your 5200™ videogaming!"
—**Arena—May, 1984**

"Meteorites....it's a dead ringer for the Atari arcade game, Asteroids."
The Video Game Update—June, 1984

"Meteorites is a tough, 24-Level game with enough in every department to satisfy even the most die-hard pulverizer, atomizer or smasher of outer space gravel."— **Electronic Games — October 1984**

Now use any Joystick on the Atari 5200™ Supersystem!

Finally! Here's the perfect solution to those well known 5200™ controller woes. The Masterplay 5200™ Interface allows you to select from the hundreds of controllers currently available for the Atari 2600™ and use them with your Atari 5200™ Supersystem. You'll be overwhelmed by how well your 5200™ plays Pac-Man and your other arcade favorites when you use the 8-direction, self-centering type controllers these games were designed for and equipped with in the arcades. The Masterplay 5200™ Interface maintains all the 5200™ keypad functions and comes complete with an auxilliary fire button which attaches to any joystick for games which use two buttons.

Masterplay 5200™ Interface **$16.95**

A meticulous rendition of an arcade classic.

Meteorites is a gaming masterpiece, designed by game players to bring home a level of game playability never before seen outside an arcade. It bypasses the Atari 5200™ "SPRITE" hardware to generate up to 60 independently moving objects on the screen with no annoying flicker. Answering the game player's most common complaint, Meteorites provides 24 incremental game levels for a virtually never ending challenge.

Meteorites **$23.95**

To Order: Send check or money order for **$16.95** per Masterplay 5200™ Interface. **$23.95** per Meteorites Cartridge or **$34.95** for both products to: **Intellicon • P.O. Box 774 • Kendall Sq. Br., Cambridge, Ma. 02142** or write us at this address with any questions regarding our products.
Be sure to add $2.00 shipping and handling. Massachusetts residents must include 5% sales tax.

For MasterCard, Visa, and C.O.D. orders
PHONE NOW TOLL FREE 1-800-824-7888 } **OPERATOR 909**
IN ALASKA & HAWAII **1-800-824-7919**

INTELLICON
P.O. Box 774 • Kendall Sq. Br., Cambridge, Ma. 02142

MUDDY MONITOR? TIME FOR HOUSECLEANING!

Dirty CRT screen have you seeing gray? Clean monitors produce brighter pictures — maybe it's time for some compu-cleaning! Statiglass Anti-Static Cleaner comes in a

convenient 18 oz. aerosol can (about $2.85) to make it easy to clean off those sticky fingerprints. It has anti-static and anti-fog properties, and leaves no gummy residue. According to the manufacturer, it actually repels dust and lint from the screen. Statiglass is also good for cleaning camera lens, plastic masks, helmets, visors, windsheilds— in fact, all Lexan, Lucite and Plexiglass surfaces.

ENTECH LISTENS TO THE PUBLIC: ENHANCES STUDIO 64

Entech listened to the users, then went back to the design room to modify and improve its **Studio 64** music synthesizer program for the Commodore 64. In answer to suggestions, the program now has improved graphics, truer musical notation (with tied notes, sharps and flats), and improved control key functions, as well as 12 sample songs.

Entech's chairman, Ray Soular, made most of the revisions on *Studio 64*. Speaking about the changes, he said, "This version was designed by the public rather than programmers. We've taken into consideration every possible suggestion to create the ultimate music synthesizer."

Current owners of *Studio 64* can upgrade to the new version by sending $10 and their old disk back to the company.

EG Readers Pick Their Favorite Games

Most Popular Computer Games

Position This Month	Position Last Month	Times on List	Game	System	Manufacturer
1	1	3	Zork I	Most Systems	Infocom
2	—	New	Robotron 2084	Most Systems	Atari, Atarisoft
3	2	4	Buck Rogers	Adam	Coleco
4	—	New	Donkey Kong Jr.	Most Systems	Atarisoft, Coleco
5	—	New	Q*Bert	Most Systems	Parker Brothers
6	—	3	Pitstop	Atari, C64	Epyx
7	—	New	Bruce Lee	Atari, C64	Datasoft
8	—	New	Gateway to Apshai	Atari, C64	Epyx
9	—	14	Minor 2049er	Most Systems	Big 5, MicroLab, Reston
10	—	New	Blue Max	Atari	Synapse
11	—	4	Flight Simulator	Most Systems	SubLogic
12	3	13	Castle Wolfenstein	Most Systems	Muse
13	—	New	Dragonriders of Pern	Atari, C64	Epyx
14	—	New	Seafox	Most Systems	Broderbund
15	—	New	HesGames	C64	HES

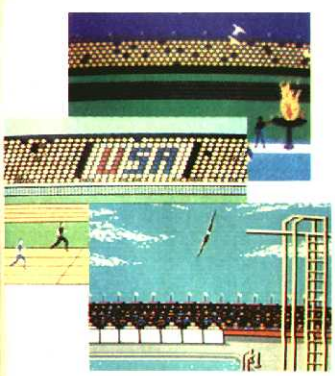
Most Popular Videogame Cartridges

Position This Month	Position Last Month	Times on List	Game Title	System	Manufacturer
1	—	2	Treasures of Tarmin	Mattel	Intellivision
2	—	6	Joust	Atari 2600 & 5200	Atari
3	—	8	Gyruss	Atari 5200	Parker Bros
4	—	13	Moon Patrol	Atari 5200	Atari
5	—	19	Star Wars	Colecovision	Parker Brothers
6	1	4	Pitfall II	Atari 2600	Activision
7	New	New	Looping	Colecovision	Coleco
8	—	15	Dig Dug	Atari 5200	Atari
9	—	17	Vanguard	Atari 5200	Atari
10	—	3	Pole Position	Atari 5200	Atari

Most Popular Coin-Op Videogames

Position This Month	Position Last Month	Times On List	Game	Manufacturer
1	7	6	Spy Hunter	Bally/Midway
2	4	7	Track & Field	Konami
3	—	3	Crossbow	Exidy
4	—	3	Sinistar	Bally/Midway
5	—	New	Punch Out	Nintendo
6	2	8	Star Wars	Atari
7	—	New	Star Trek	Sega
8	—	3	Pole Position II	Atari
9	3	10	MACH 3	Mylstar
10	—	15	Tag Team Wrestling	Data East

SUMMER GAMES.™
NOW IT'S YOUR CHANCE TO GO FOR THE GOLD.



The 84 Olympics are over, but for you, the competition has just begun. How well can you score in track, swimming, diving, shooting, gymnastics and more? So realistic, there's even an opening ceremony and awards presentation after each event.

Unlike other "Olympics-Like" games, Summer Games has incredible realism, superb state-of-the-art graphics and sound effects (including national anthems from 18 countries), and it is a true action-strategy game. In each event you must plan and execute your game strategy in order to maximize your score. It is not just a matter of how fast you can move the joystick.

So change into your running shoes, grab your joystick and **GO FOR THE GOLD!**

One or more players; joystick controlled.

EPYX™ COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Strategy Games for the Action-Game Player

THE SPOILS OF PIRACY

In your October 1984 issue, in the Arcade Award contenders section, you show a picture of a game from Lucasfilm called **Rescue on Fractalus.** My friend owns a game made by Lucasfilm with the same graphics and it's called **Behind Jagiline.** Did you make a mistake (no offense), or has the name been changed?

Brent Davenport
Baton Rouge, LA

Ed: We hate to be the ones to break this to you, but your friend is a software pirate. **Behind Jagiline** *was the working title of the game during its production phase, but because of the overwhelming number of pirates who stole the game via computer lines, Lucasfilm and Atari are in court as of this writing.*

Thanks to people like your "friend," **Rescue on Fractalus** *may never become available for us more honest consumers, and Lucasfilm (rightly) is shying away from the electronic gaming field as a whole. We've been on our soapboxes, warning gamers that piracy can ruin the hobby, but some people just don't listen. Maybe now that one of the most innovative and exciting programs ever produced for the home screen may never see distribution, will people understand the full consequences of stealing other people's work.*

And if next year there's nothing really exciting to play on your home computer or videogame, thank all the software priates of the world for depriving **you,** *the electronic gamer, of your right to buy the best there is.*

THIS MONTH'S QUIRK

I found a great glitch in Atarisoft's **Defender** for the Commodore 64. When your ship explodes, at the largest point at the explosion, hit RESTORE. After the title screen appears, press the button twice to start a new game. Your ship, the humans, and your enemies should be 7 or 8 times their original size.

John Lattion
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Ed: Get ready to receive your Paxxon Pac-Man wall clock, and thanks for the photos you submitted to prove your glitch. Unfortunately, they were too fuzzy for us to print. Also, a special credit to Darren Fryendall, who submitted the same glitch to EG a day after John's arrived.

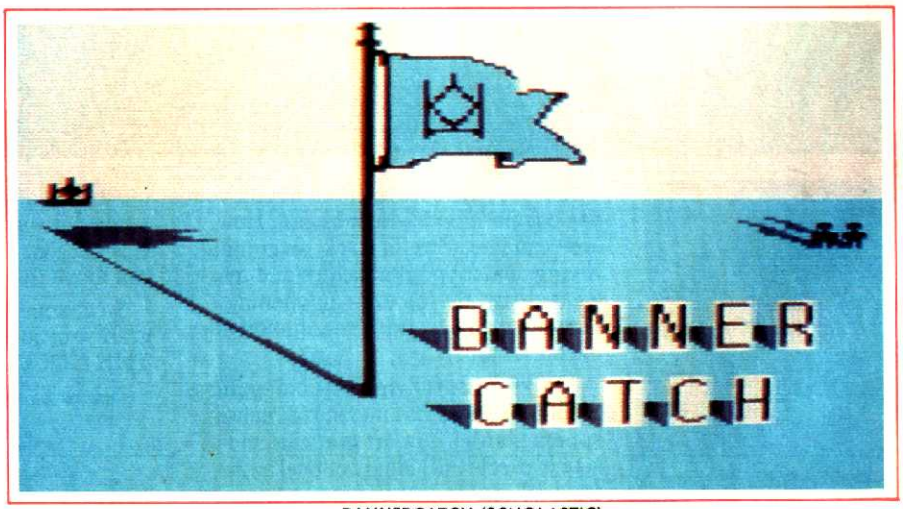
SCHOLARLY ERROR

In the Arcade Awards section of the October 1984 issue, EG mistakenly credited **Bannercatch** *to Spinnaker. The program is actually being marketed by Scholastic. We regret the error and apologize for any confusion this might have caused.*

DEBATES TRACKBALL REVIEW

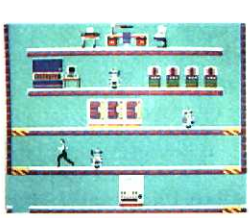
I must comment on Tracie Forman's review of the Coleco Roller Controller. The controllers do fit into a snug compartment, but we very seldom take them out again. Having them held tightly in the position of an "arcade joystick" greatly improves game scores with practice. As to the "major chore" of connecting the unit, come on! It only has to be done once. You make it sound like it has to be done each time you play.

Finally, Coleco's audience is not "captive," it's devoted. I know it's hard to be unbiased with a company that doesn't advertise with you, but try to be fair.



BANNERCATCH (SCHOLASTIC)

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION.™
YOUR MISSION–TO SAVE THE WORLD.



As a member of the exclusive Anti-Computer Terrorist Squad (ACT), your mission is to find and reach the infamous Elvin, who is holding the world's population hostage under threat of nuclear annihilation. You must negotiate a path through the rooms and tunnels of his headquarters trying to avoid Elvin's robot protectors.

Should you try to outrun or jump over the next robot or play it safe and take the time to assemble the codes needed to deactivate the robots and then to find and stop Elvin.

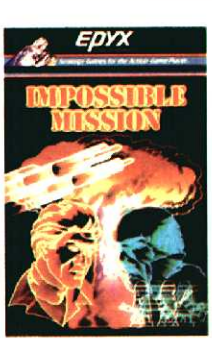
Use your camera to photograph as many clues as possible to find the password which will allow you to penetrate Elvin's control room.

Your Mission—To Save The World, But Hurry!

One player; joystick controlled.

EPYX™
COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Strategy Games for the Action-Game Player



P.S. I do subscribe to EG, and as a whole it's an excellent magazine.

Alan Taylor
Address Unknown

Ed: Just for the record, whether a company does or doesn't advertise with us is completely unrelated to the reviews its products get. Just look at some back issues of the magazine. Can you honestly say that all negative reviews are of non-advertisers' products? Or that all positive reviews reflect the people who advertise? Our reviewers don't know which company is advertising, which we feel preserves our editorial integrity. When you see a review, it reflects the reviewer's opinion — not EG's advertiser base.

WIZARDS OF GAMING

While reading your magazine, we saw that you were interested in gaming clubs. Have we got one for you! This club mainly deals with the Apple computer systems, but we have members with all systems (2600, Intellivision, ColecoVision, and C-64). The game we specialize in is **Wizardry.** Our club address is: Wizards "R" Us, 309 Arrowood, Lake Jackson, Texas, 77566.

Chris Hammons, President
Lake, Jackson, TX

STILL SEARCHING

In your March '84 issue, you said that Coleco would be coming out with a game called **Tunnels & Trolls.** I saved my money for this game. As far as I know, this game still hasn't come to market. I don't know if I missed it or if it just isn't out.

You see, my dad is in the military and we live in West Germany. My selection of games is quite limited, since the German ColecoVision games will not work on my American system. All games I purchase are ordered from the States.

Is *Tunnels & Trolls* out?

James J. Thome, Jr.
West Germany

Ed: As of this writing, **Tunnels & Trolls** *is* **still** *not out, despite its having been announced about two years ago. But all isn't lost for ColecoVisionaries and Adamites with a taste for adventure. Epyx's* **Gateway to Apshai** *is in the same genre as* **T & T,** *and it's available even as you read this. Check out the review in Programmable Parade for further details.*

5200 OBSOLETE?

I am an owner of the Atari 5200, and was a little upset when I heard about Atari's 7800. Will this make my 5200 obsolete? Is it worth it to sell my 5200 for the 7800? And could you please print or send me a list of all cartridges available for the 5200 and ColecoVision?

Erik DuRon
New York, NY

Ed: Atari stopped production of the 5200 towards the end of last year, so like it or not, the answer is yes, your 5200 is obsolete. That doesn't mean it isn't a great game system, and Atari plans to support the machine with new games for at least the near future. To sell the 5200 and buy a 7800? That's a decision only you can make.

And, sorry to say, the answer to your last request is no. For the same reason that we can't answer letters personally — time — we can't keep and constantly upgrade full software lists for each system. We do round up listings and reviews of hundreds of different games in the EG Software Encyclopedia, though; and each new edition adds literally hundreds of new listings to reflect the current market.

NEW 2600 STRATEGY GUIDE?

How come I don't see any more Atari 2600 strategy guides in bookstores? Also, on page 51 of your September issue, you advertise "The Players Strategy Guide to Atari VCS Home Video Games." Is it a new, revised copy or the original one?

David Mantell
Brooklyn, NY

Ed: There are two reasons for the fall-off in 2600 strategy guides. First, as computers and advanced videogame systems drop in price, public interest shifts to the higher-memory, more complex electronic games, so the interest in the 2600 isn't as strong. Second, many publishers are hesitant to jump in and publish books that they know will be out of date in a mere six months or so, what with new releases coming out all the time.

Finally, the "Players Strategy Guide" you saw advertised is indeed the original edition.

COMMODORE CLUB

Hi! We're the Downriver Commodore Group. We're just forming and are open to anyone with an interest in Commodore computers. We saw your call for clubs in Readers Replay, and want to let you know who we are and that we read EG. Thank you.

Downriver Commodore Group
Ron Marshall
17029 Keppen
Allen Park, MI 48101

Ed: Thanks for letting our readers in on the club, Ron. And good luck with it. G

GATEWAY TO APSHAI (EPYX)

WELCOME TO APSHAI. YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR LUNCH.

Boy, have you taken a wrong turn. One moment you're gathering treasure and the next you're being eyed like a side of beef.

You're in the Gateway to Apshai.™ The new cartridge version of the Computer Game of the Year,* Temple of Apshai.™

Gateway has eight levels. And over 400 dark, nasty chambers to explore. And because it's joystick controlled, you'll have to move faster than ever.

But first you'll have to consider your strategy. Is it treasure you're after? Or glory? You'll live longer if you're greedy, but slaying monsters racks up a higher score.

The Apshai series is the standard by which all other adventure games are judged. And novices will not survive.

They'll be eaten.

One player; Temple of Apshai, disk/cassette; Gateway to Apshai, cartridge, joystick control.

EPYX COMPUTER SOFTWARE

STRATEGY GAMES FOR THE ACTION-GAME PLAYER.

*Game Manufacturers Association, 1981

GIFTS FOR

Goodies, Gizmos And Gadgets

There's one in every crowd: the type of person who buys new hardware and peripherals as soon as they want them. As anyone who's ever tried to buy EG editor Arnie Katz a birthday gift knows, it's almost impossible to anticipate people who don't believe in delayed gratification, and these types are the hardest to buy presents for. Short of a tie or a box of those little soaps that nobody ever uses, what does a gamer's friend do?

EG's editors have left no stone unturned this year in an all-out effort to bring our readers a list of gamers' delights, guaranteed to light up the face of your favorite electronic gamer while leaving enough in your budget for a few extra sugarplums.

COMPUTER CONSUMABLES

The sweetest gift for that special computerphile is Long Grove Confectionary's chocolate computer, a perfect snack after a hard day's computing. The mini microcomputer measures 3" x 5" x 4", a great stocking stuffer. Priced at $9.95, the chocolate computer can be ordered by calling Long Grove at (312) 634-9007.

A treat with a more adult flavor is an after-dinner drink, and Jim Beame offers the perfect decanter. The bourbon manufacturer gained a reputation for its ceramic collectors' bottles, and the newest one is—you guessed it—a computer. The Jim Beame computer bottle is filled with the company's own bourbon, and is available at liquor stores around the country.

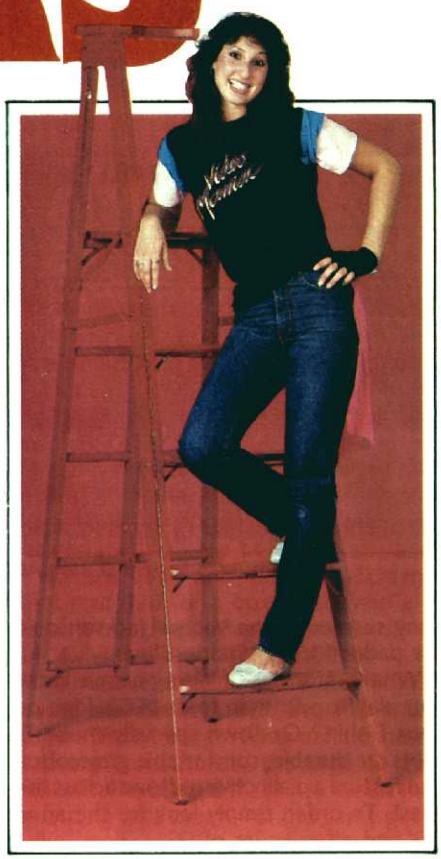
BODY ENGLISH

Video Maniac has an entire catalogue of "electronic sportswear," T-shirts and accessories for videogaming hobbyists. Our favorite is a sleek, shiny black jacket with the words "Video Maniac" (on the sleeve). Video Maniac's shirts are truly distinctive, with fashionable touches like double short sleeves (the top sleeve is cuffed to show off a coordinating undersleeve) and front and back designs. To order Video Maniac's full-color catalogue and a free decal, send a check or money order for $1.50 to Video Maniac Sports Accessories, P.O. Box 2728, Capistrano Beach, CA 92624. And be sure to check out the com-

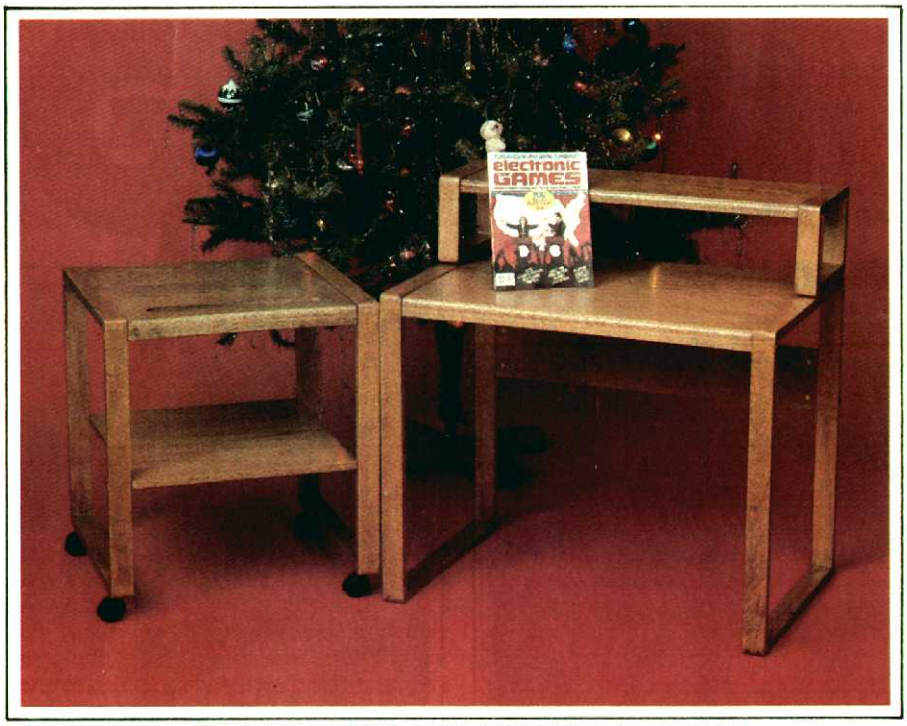
GAMERS

To Please Every Gamer

Jim Beame themed its computer-shaped decanters (1 & 2) to the election, while Long Grove Confectionary's chocolate computer (4) is non-political. The foam-tipped Bit Banger (3) from Bits and PC's is very user-friendly — even computer illiterates will find it useful in eliminating computer frustration.



Game Nurse Angela vamps in video fashions from Video Maniac. Above, the trendy tri-color T-shirt; below, a winter model, with longer sleeves. In both photos, she is wearing the padded Video Sports Glove, to keep hands in shape after a hard day's gaming.



Suncom's System Station Alpha desk (right) and printer table.

pany's answer to the Michael Jackson look, the padded Video Sports Glove.

What better way of letting people know you play to win than to put EG's logo on your T-shirt? Our own specially-made T-shirts are durable, comfortable gray cotten and feature a distinctive red logo across the chest. To order, simply look for the ad in this and other issues of EG.

GIFTS THAT COMPUTE

With the price of a good home computer system within the means of so many families, expect to see a lot of home computers under the tree this year. There are a number of good ideas for first-time computerists' gifts.

Nurse Angela again in Video Maniac's slick satin jacket. Her friends from Tomy are the voice-activated Verbot (L) and the Dingbot.

Start with the basics: a solid, attractive computer table like Suncom's new System Station computer workstations. The items pictured on these pages are made out of solid wood, not fiberboard (pressed sawdust), so they'll probably last longer and take more abuse over the years. Suncom's System Station Alpha desk, which should accommodate any popular micro, costs $99.95, while the matching printer table (System Station Beta) sells for $89.95.

Look for Suncom's computer furniture at your local computer store or write to Suncom at 260 Holbrook Dr., Wheeling, IL 60090.

Sentinel Technologies makes 5 1/4" and 8" diskettes in a literal rainbow of colors, giving computerists a foolproof way to keep word processing disks separate from saved adventure games and programs-in-progress. Each disk package contains 12 disks, with at least one red, orange, yellow, green, light blue and dark blue disk per package. The clear plastic box is sturdy enough to use as an extra storage case. Sentinel's colored floppies, and other computer products, can be ordered by calling 1-800-323-5005 (in Massachusetts, 1-800-323-5001) or writing to Sentinel Technologies, One Sentinel Plaza, Hyannis, MA 02601.

The larger a gamer's collection of disks, the more he or she needs a storage case to keep them all organized and dust-free. Disk Bank's Media Mate 5 is a durable plastic case that can hold up to 50 diskettes at a time, neatly filed by five adjustable plastic dividers. The box's grooved interior keeps floppies from sliding out of order. A push-button lock and handle for easy car-

If your game (and other) disks have started taking over the whole house, keep them in order with Media Mate 5 — an inexpensive floppy disk file and carrier. Everyone can always use more blank disks. Why not get them in colors from Sentinel and be able to tell adventure game 'save' disk from term papers at a glance.

GIFTS for GAMERS

rying are extras usually found on higher-priced storage cases, but the Media Mate 5 costs less than $20. Disk Bank can be contacted at Disk Bank, Amaray Corporation, 2251 Grant Road, Los Altos CA 94022.

The Electra Guard 3 is a great way of insuring a new computer against costly damage caused by electrical surges. The $18.95 device plugs into the wall outlet and filters out system-crashing surges. For more information, contact Computer Power Solutions Inc., 8800 49th Street North, Ste. 203, Pinellas Park, FL 33565, or call toll-free 1-(800)237-6010.

A dusty monitor can dampen even the prettiest computer graphics. The Screenwipe, from the Aldine Paper Company, was designed to keep both monitors and TV screens clean and dust-free. Screenwipes cost $20 for a box of 20, and are available from Aldine Paper Company, 315 Park Avenue South, NY NY 10010.

The most unusual computer item that's crossed our desks is Bits and P.C.'s Bit Banger. The Bit Banger fills a definite need for every computerist—the urge to get even with the blasted machine! When the computing gets tough—or the game goes badly—micro owners can vent their frustrations on the machine itself with no need to worry about damages, thanks to this soft foam-tipped mallet. The 13½" Bit Banger fits comfortably in the hand and is packaged with a 16-page instruction booklet that makes suggestions for dealing with computers with tongue firmly in cheek. For $14.95, it's an inexpensive way of reducing high-tech stress. Order by calling 1-800-632-2122 in California, 1-800-227-3900 in all other areas. Write to Bits and P.C.'s at 1850 Union Street #490, San Francisco CA 94123.

Commodore 64 owners can speed up their disk drives by first loading Datamost's specially-designed disk. The speed-up disk retails for about $15, and is guaranteed to make adventure games, word-processing chores, and any programming requiring a lot of disk activity much easier to use. If your computer store is temporarily sold out. contact Datamost at 89432 Fullbright Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311.

Speaking of disks, User Care came up with a way to repair disks that have been damaged due to dirt, spills, or general debris. The User Care Emergency Disk Saver Kit guides computerists step by step through a simple process to remove the disk from its jacket and clean the floppy itself. While the kit can't repair cracked, burned or torn disks, it can help clean pawprints or spilled soda off valuable programs, for a relatively low price of $18.95.

For information, contact User Care Corporation, Lawrence KS 66044, or call 816-523-2880.

'TIS THE SEASON

Two companies are offering games in the holiday spirit. **A Christmas Adventure** (Bitcards/Apple, C-64) sends gamers on a merry search through the North Pole ice castles in a quest to find Santa Claus before Christmastime. The game is designed for the whole family to play, though kids under 10 may need a little guidance. A special Help option makes it easy for even novice adventurers to help save Christmas. The Apple version contains hi-res graphics with animation and zoom sequences, while the C-64 edition is mostly text. A special customization option lets the computerist enter the gamer's name so that references to him/herself will appear throughout the adventure.

A CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE (BITCARDS)

A Christmas Adventure is available on disk at $14.95 for the basic adventure, or $16.95 for customizable version, from Bitcards, 30 W. Service Road, Champlain NY 12919, phone (914) 274-1103.

Davka Corporation (845 N. Michigan Ave. Suite 843, Chicago IL 60611) has an entire line of Jewish-oriented game software for the Apple, Atari, and C-64. The games cover the gamut from **Dreidel Drama** to **Game of the Maccabees**, a Chanukah-based arcade game in which players fight against invading Greek warriors, Maccabees and pagan temples. Davka games range in price from $24.95 to $34.95, and an entire catalogue of games is offered.

MECHANICAL MARVELS

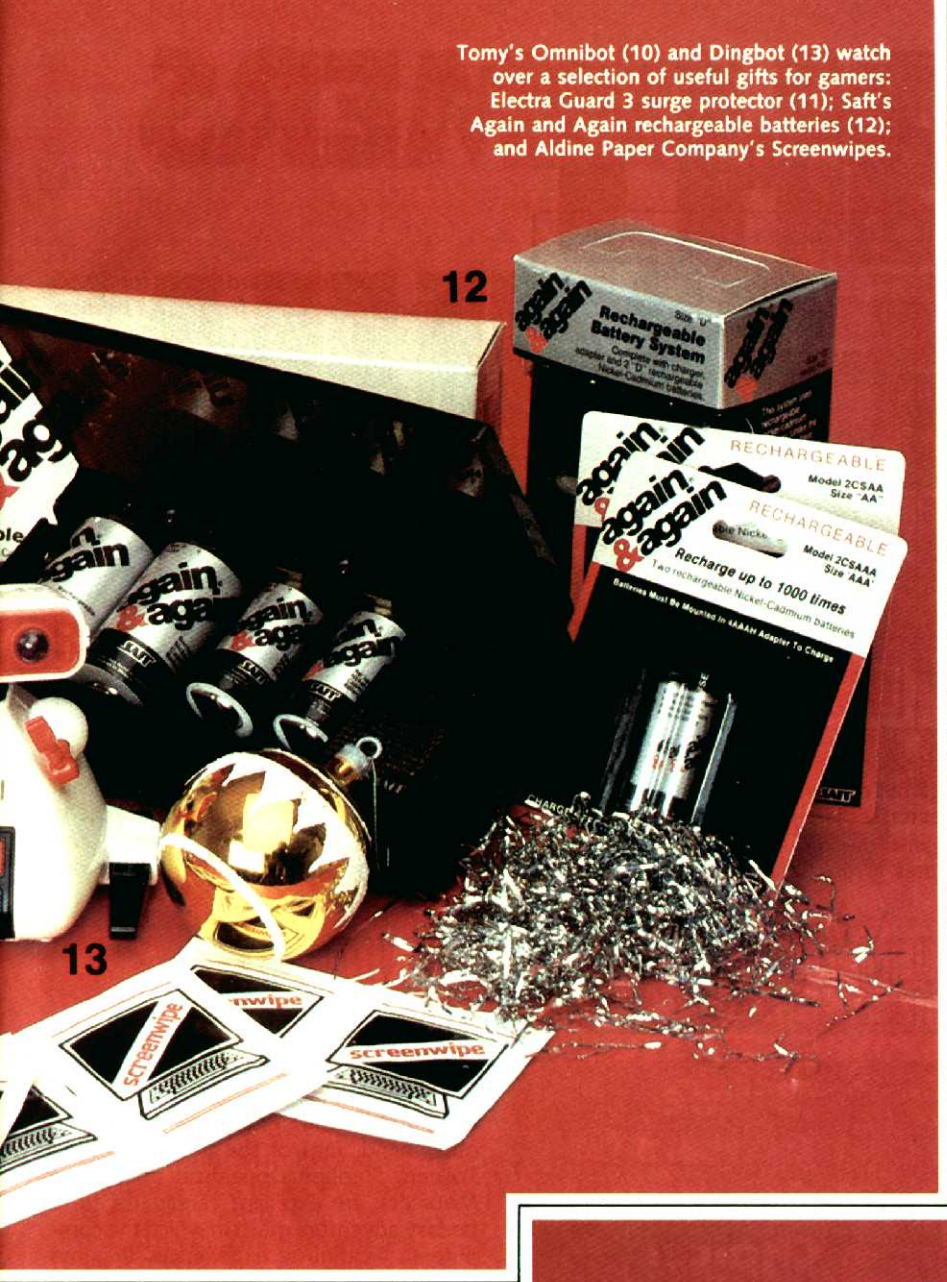
Anyone who's seen the "**Star Wars**" saga probably left the movie theater wishing for a friendly little companion like Artoo Deetoo. While robotics technology still has a long way to go before home users will see a superdroid who vacuums, dusts walks the dog *and* saves the Federation, Tomy's line of home robots is truly amazing.

The tiniest droid of all is Tomy's adorable Dingbot, a self-propelled little chatterbox who wanders around any area. When he bumps into something, he chatters in distress before taking off in new, untried directions. Little Dingbot is packaged with a tiny floor plan that can be put in his poseable arms for extra effect. At only $9.95, the Dingbot is an inexpensive crowd-pleaser sure to delight children up to 100 years old.

The next step up the line is the Verbot, a remote-controlled, voice-activated droid that can be voice-programmed, or "trained," to move, blink, smile, and pick up and deliver items. The Verbot offers a lot of mechanical meat for the dollar, retailing at under $30.

The largest and most expensive of the robots is the Omnibot, a larger machine that operates by remote control or from memory. The Omnibot walks, talks, carries objects, and has a 7-day, 7-command vocabulary that can even be used to turn him into an alarm clock—and then to leave the area before the sleeper turns him off. Omnibot's programs are contained on cas-

GIFTS for GAMERS



Tomy's Omnibot (10) and Dingbot (13) watch over a selection of useful gifts for gamers: Electra Guard 3 surge protector (11); Saft's Again and Again rechargeable batteries (12); and Aldine Paper Company's Screenwipes.

Going broke, just keeping your portable tape deck/radio/handheld game/calculator/computer (or whatever) in power? Some products, like stereo radios, or electronic keyboards, use 6, 8 or even 10 batteries. Using one of these fancy gadgets 7 1/2 hours per week can run to $600 in disposable alkaline batteries in four years. Saft has the answer—"Again & Again" rechargeable batteries come in popular sizes (AAA, AA, C, D, and 9-volt). Each can be reused up to 1000 times using a Saft Battery Recharger.

The Saft recharger Model WCF-4, $5.29, plugs directly into any standard wall outlet, and overnight puts new life into four AAA or AA batteries, or two C or Ds, or one 9-volt battery. Saft's deluxe recharger, Model CC-1, $14.98, is a countertop unit for four AAA, AA, C or D batteries, or two 9-volts. A special indicator light lets the user know the batteries are being recharged.

LAST CALL FOR THE VECTREX

Triton Products Company of California has a package to stir the reflexes of all Vectrex owners. For $69.95, Triton provides the Vectrx 3-D imager, which comes with the 3-D **Mine Storm** cartridge, plus two more three-dimensional games, **3-D Narrow Escape** and **3-D Crazy Coaster**.

Fidelity Electronics puts an old-fashioned game under the tree with an electronic twist: Backgammon. The Vectrex is still around and makes a terrific gift. Below, the Vectrex 3-D Imager and 3-D games.

sette, he also serves as a tape deck for those so inclined. All these features are built into the $50 droid, making Tomy's top-of-the-line model a good bet to be the most popular gift received this holiday season!

All three Tomy robots should be available at major toy and game outlets. If you can't locate a dealer in your area, contact Tomy at 901 E. 233rd St., Carson CA 90014.

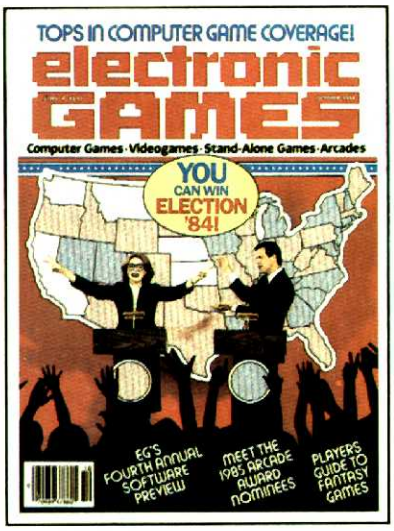
We've all heard about Fidelity's excellent chess-playing stand-alone, but few people are aware that the same company manufactures a stand-alone backgammon player. The computer-controlled backgammon board takes on all comers in the popular contest, with all the strategies, doubling options, and tournament options from the popular boardgame. Players can handle their own dice, though the computer keeps a sharp watch on illegal move attempts. The Backgammon Challenger is available wherever Fidelity products are sold, and costs about $50.

GIFTS for GAMERS

The former casts one gamer as the navigator of a powerful ship travelling through the interstellar fortress of a 23rd-century warlord, avoiding space debris while trying to destroy the warlord and his defenses. The latter game puts players in the lead car of a roller coaster, which must avoid birds and thrown ice cream cones while traversing steep hills and turns. Extra points can be earned by those brave enough to ride the coaster with their arms in the air.

To get the Vectrex package, call 1-800-227-6900 or write to Triton Products, P.O. Box 9123, San Francisco CA 94128.

Vectrex owners and other gamers can keep track of their highest scores with L.A. Winter's Video Game Score Card. This 9" X 12", three-color laminated board uses a water-soluble ink pen to record high scores, then wipe them off easily when the score's been topped. The Score Card has spaces to write down the champion's and challenger's scores in three phases of a game, with total points in a separate box. It even provides space for recording the game selection and difficulty level, and features graphics pretty enough to grace any arcade. The Score Board retails for $9.50 and can be ordered from L.A. Winter, 11532 Stephanie Lane, Garden Grove CA 92640.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FOR ELECTRONIC EXPERTS

A subscription to Electronic Games Magazine is still the best way to please an electronic gamer—where else can you find so much news, or so many reviews, about our favorite hobby? If someone on your gift list still doesn't receive EG regularly, save him or her a trip to the newsstand and fill out the subscription order form in your friend's name.

Likewise, EG's second annual Software Encyclopedia has hundreds of game listings and short reviews for Apple, Atari, C-64, VIC-20, Atari 5200, ColecoVision, and Atari 2600 owners. Let the experts guide your game-buying decisions and save you from getting stuck with a lemon.

GIVING THE RIGHT SOFTWARE

So many games — and so hard to pick the right one for that special someone on your holiday shopping list. That's a dilemma most of us face at this time of year.

A perfect method for selecting gifts is still awaiting discovery, but any smart shopper can improve the odds by thinking before buying. The following questions will help get prospective gift-givers on the right track.

Some Questions to Guide Your Choices

What kind of system does the prospective recipient own? This is common sense: The best game in the world is only a hunk of plastic if the home arcader has the wrong brand of machine, or if the system lacks sufficient memory and the proper mass storage device (ie: a recorder for a program on cassette). This immediately eliminates many titles from consideration, letting the buyer concentrate on fewer possibilities.

How old is the gamer? People of all ages love computer games, but not necessarily the same ones. Pre-teeners, especially the under-six bunch, may prefer kideo and educational games specifically designed for their age group. On the other hand, adults generally favor games which stress thinking over those which demand quick reflexes.

Does the gift-getter enjoy any non-electronic games? Most folks who play recreational computer software these days probably liked games even before they booted their first disk. Tap this mother lode of interest, and you're home free. If your favorite electronic gamer once sweated over a military boardgame, why not try a computer wargame? If he or she loved conventional word or puzzle contests, a computerized version of the same sort of thing might be just the ticket.

Does the gamer have any other major hobbies? You don't have to be a fight fan to enjoy a computer boxing simulation, but a liking for the former greatly increases the chances that the latter will prove entertaining. So if the intended gift recipient watches Wall Street in his or her spare time, a sophisticated financial simulation might get a warmer reception than a three-for-one stock split.

What subject matter does he or she enjoy most in other media? Electronic gaming overlaps other forms of pop culture more than you might think. If the person for whom you're shopping loved "The Postman Always Rings Twice" and "Body Heat," a mystery adventure game in which the player actually gets to be a detective might solve your gift problem. On the other hand, fans of the novels of J.R.R. Tolkien, Stephen Donaldson or Michael Moorcock are excellent candidates for a fantasy adventure quest in which the computerist vicariously experiences the joys and sorrows of being a hero in a realm of fantasy. And, of course, let's not forget that licensing has brought many concepts developed in movies, TV and books into the electronic gaming arena. If you know someone who loves the Smurfs or goes ga-ga over those pesky Gremlins, games starring those characters could be a good bet. On a more adult level, books such as "Rendezvous with Rama" and "Robots of Dawn" have been turned into computer adventure games.

Once these questions point you in approximately the right direction, it become a matter of picking the right title within the right category. Games are such an individual taste that it's hard to give definitive advice, but help *is* available. Once you know the type of game your friend or loved one wants, check Arcade Award winners and nominees, EG's monthly Popularity Poll, and reviews of recent releases to unearth the titles that fill the bill.

And when the presents are opened, a smile of delight will be your reward.

THE HULK HAS GONE SOFT.

The man who becomes a monster has just become a software game.

Commodore introduces QUESTPROBE,™ a series of adventures that begin where comics leave off, starring your favorite Super Heroes.™ Like the Hulk.™ And Spiderman.™ (He's next.)

Now you can do more than follow the Hulk's adventures, you can live them. On your Commodore 64™ or the new Commodore PLUS/4.™ Command the intellect of Dr. Robert Bruce Banner (the man). Harness the fury of the Hulk (the monster). Use every bit of logic, reason, imagination and cunning you possess (this is why educators like this series) to unlock the mystery of the chief examiner and his strength sapping door.

We couldn't have captured the Hulk without the help of Marvel Comics™ and Scott Adams of Adventures International.

But a puny human like you can pick up the Hulk all by yourself at any software store. (It's just a diskette.)

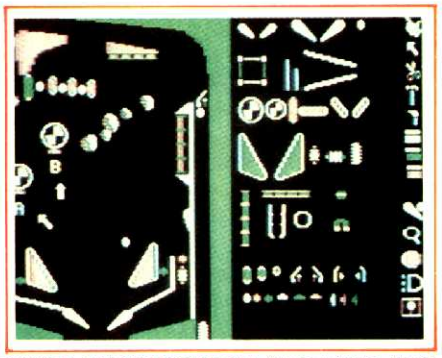
And while you're there look at all the other Commodore software programs for fun and profit, home, business and monkey business.

You'll see why Commodore is quickly becoming a software giant.

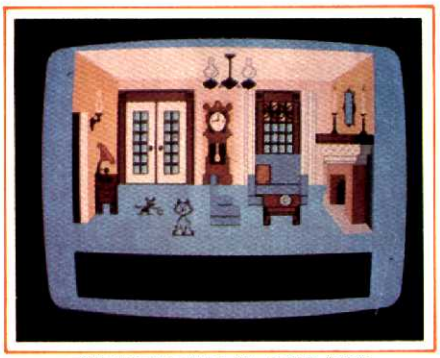
COMMODORE

Trademark of Marvel Comics Group

ENTERTAIN



PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET (ELECTRONIC ARTS)



THE HOUSE THAT JILL BUILT (CBS)

GRANDMA'S HOUSE (SPINNAKER)

Games Aren't the Only Way to Have Fun

By JOYCE WORLEY & ARNIE KATZ

Until a year or so ago, recreational computer software was just a fancy way to say "games." There has always been a scattering of music and art programs, but few other kinds of non-game entertainments. Now a trip to the local computer store unearths dozens of electronic entertainments, in addition to the continually growing library of games.

And what entertainments they are! The variety is incredible, ranging from toys for pre-schoolers to puzzles tricky enough to please the most sophisticated adult.

Bill Budge's **Pinball Construction Set** (Electronic Arts/Most systems) deserves the credit for spawning the hottest current trend in entertainment software, "electronic colorforms". Programs in this category provide banks of designs, objects, cartoons, and so forth, which the computerist can arrange as desired on various pre-drawn static backgrounds. This concept is at the heart of many recently published titles.

Tailoring electronic colorforms to the needs and interests of youngsters has produced video dollhouse programs. **My House-My Home**, (Kangaroo Software/Apple) is a three-story dwelling. A pint-size decorator can choose any combination of furniture, people and pets to decorate the place by selecting from the numerous choices as they travel across the bottom of the screen.

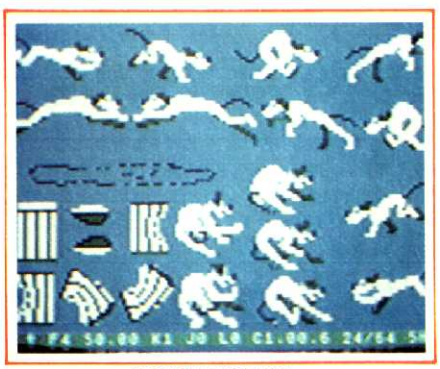
The House That Jill Built (CBS/Apple, C-64), designed by Joyce Hakansson, provides four different homes to furnish inside and out. Some objects, such as a goldfish in a bowl, are animated.

Spinnaker's **Grandma's House** (Atari, C-64), designed by IPS, takes a different tack. After choosing an on-screen personality, the junior decorator moves him or her to different scenes, like the beach, a city, or a department store. Each screen holds a variety of objects that can be carried back to the gingerbread house where Grandma lives.

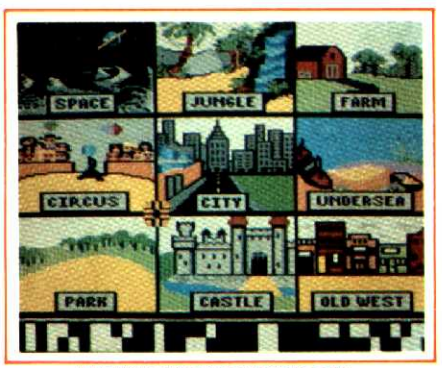
Many entertainments combine electronic colorforms with other programs such as word processors, cartoon animators or even paint-box options.

IPS' **MovieMaker** (Reston/Atari) opens up a whole new computer sub-hobby: creating mini-cartoons. This is certainly the most flexible program of its type, and even though it takes some practice to master some aspects, like animation, it is still relatively easy and straightforward.

Just Imagine (Commodore/C-64) offers nine settings (jungle, moon, barnyard, etc.), which the computerist can customize by deciding whether it's summer or winter, day or night. Any three of 50 available characters can be animated and steered around the screen with a joystick. The child then writes a simple story about the on-screen world with the built-in word processor. A touch of a button plays the whole thing back, with animation and sound



MOVIEMAKER (IPS)



JUST IMAGINE (COMMODORE)

SHOW DIRECTOR (MINDSCAPE)

MENT: A NEW WAY TO PLAY

effects. As a bonus, trivia facts appear on screen to help pass the time while the program loads.

Show Director (Mindscape/Most systems) lets a young (ages 8-12) director write a script, and then creates a story by combining backgrounds, animated characters, music, and other sound effects. There's even a drawing option for designing special props.

Kermit's Electronic Story Maker (Simon & Schuster/Apple, C-64) lets kids pick from eight Muppet stars and plenty of auxiliary objects and characters, then place them on 12 different backgrounds. There are even noisy inhabitants, like a tuba, a barking dog, and a tweeting bird. These characters and items are used to construct simple sentences like, "Kermit jumps on the moon," which are then illustrated by on-screen action. At its top level, the program can handle complex sentences with up to two clauses, such as "While Miss Piggy sleeps in the jungle, Kermit bounces in the rocket." Kids can have a ball populating exotic locales with the lovable Muppet creatures, while absorbing some painless reading-readiness lessons.

Barbie, Hot Wheels, and G.I. Joe (Epyx/Atari) capitalize on electronic colorforms technology to present new ways of enjoying some pre-teen favorites. *Barbie* converts the Mattel doll into an on-screen model. Barbie drives through town in her Barbie-car, and shops in a mall full of fashionable boutiques like a credit-card-wielding tornado to accumulate a fancy and flashy wardrobe. It's electronic paper dolls!

In *Hot Wheels*, those too young to actually drive can enjoy the vicarious experience of being a motorist — parking, driving through the street, and even visiting service stations. *G.I. Joe* stars electronic on-screen toy soldiers.

Movie Musical Madness (CBS/Atari, C-64), designed by the Jazz Scats, gives would-be directors the chance to create a miniature movie, complete with musical score. Choose the character, pick props, move the on-screen star around the set to create the drama, then pick the theme music to accompany the playlet.

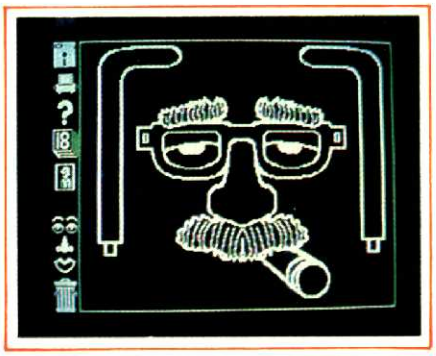
Mask Parade Party (Springboard/Most systems) uses the computer to create costumes, then prints them out to be colored and worn. Keyboard control combined with on-screen icons lets non-readers design masks, hats, jewelry, glasses and badges.

Quite a few programs can provide hard copy for computerists who own printers. **Bank Street StoryBook** (Mindscape/Most systems), written by George Brackett, draws in four colors plus black and white. The user can then edit and color the design, and write an accompanying story. When the entire creation is done, the program is capable of printing out the results as a coloring book.

George Brackett has also authored a program to turn older kids and adults into video novelists. In **StoryTree** (Scholastic/Apple), budding authors pen stories up to 100 pages long, complete with branches that create different plot pathways and varied endings.

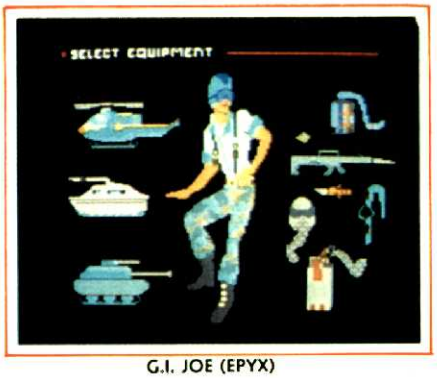
Electronic jigsaw puzzles solve the problem which has confronted picture assembling fans throughout the ages: How do you keep from losing at least one of those pesky little pieces before you finish putting it together?

Puzzle Mania (Readers Digest/Apple,



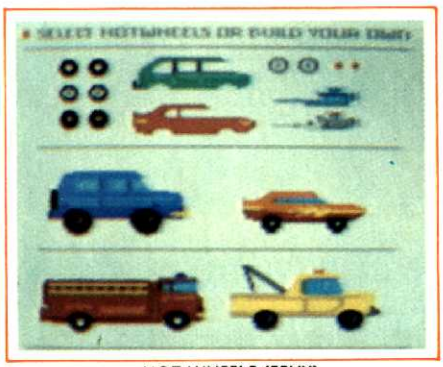
MASK PARADE (SPRINGBOARD)

MOVIE MUSICAL MADNESS (CBS)

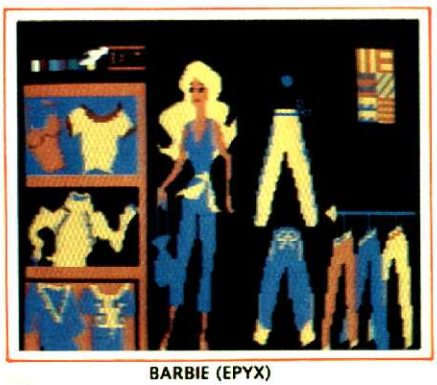


G.I. JOE (EPYX)

KERMIT'S ELECTRONIC STORY MAKER (S&S)



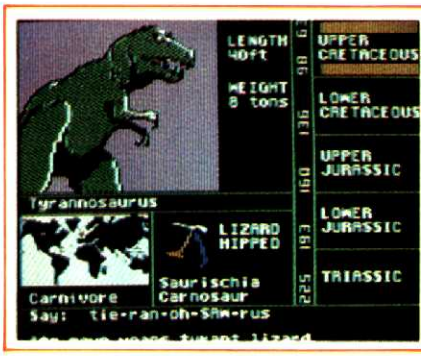
HOT WHEELS (EPYX)



BARBIE (EPYX)

PUZZLE MASTER (SPRINGBOARD)

JIGSAW JOGGLE (ORBYTE)



DINOSAUR DIG (CBS)

C-64, IBM-PC, IBM-PCjr), by Frank Messina, has seven puzzles, each one available at six skill levels. This program is very easy for beginners, because it provides hints and won't accept inncorrectly placed pieces. A paintbox option lets computerists make changes. *Puzzle Mania* can lift a low-res picture from any other program to create a new puzzle.

Peanuts Picture Puzzler (Random House/Apple), for kids from pre-school to age 12, randomly creates a puzzle with four, eight or 16 pieces starring the "Peanuts" characters. When the picture is put back together, it animates. The disk holds hundreds of pictures, or users can design their own.

Puzzle Master (Springboard/Most systems) provides flexibility by allowing pictures to be divided into two to 800 pieces. An art option draws new designs.

Jigsaw Joggle (Orbyte/Apple, C-64) has four pictures at each of four difficulty levels for a total of 16 paintings. This memory-tester is a little different from other jigsaw programs. After briefly showing the player the finished picture, the screen displays a grid. The user examines pieces one by one and places them on the checkerboard. The computer accepts wrong entries, making this puzzle much more challenging than those which reject incorrect pieces.

Sometimes it's hard to differentiate between games and entertainments in the exciting new category of computerized books. Trillium is producing interactive novels like **Amazon** (Apple/64K disk), in which the main goal is to stay in character and pick the appropriate plot pathways. Prune back the number of branchings so that the program is essentially a linear, though interactive, electronic book and you've got an entertainment.

Dinosaur Dig (CBS Software/Apple, C-64, IBM-PC, IBM-PCjr), created by Neosoft under supervision of Nicholas Hotton III (the fossil reptile specialist at the Smithsonian Institute), is a computerized book about dinosaurs. A keyboard overlay makes it easy to call up facts about 32 different species, primarily regarding their size, diet and habitat. Five quizzes test knowledge.

'Recreational software' is more than just a fancy way to say 'games.'

Wyndham Classics, published by Spinnaker, retells children's classics, like "The Wizard of Oz," "Gulliver's Travels," and "Tom Sawyer."

Little Red Riding Hood (Playground Software/Atari, C-64) is an interactive storybook with animated graphics and a built-in voice. The child uses a light pen or keyboard to make the story progress.

One of the year's most beautiful "computer books" is **Sky Travel: A Window To Our Galaxy** (Commodore/C-64), a deluxe astronomy book created by Deltron, Ltd. It shows the location of more than 1200 stars, 88 constellations, the sun, the moon (with phases), planets, comets, and numerous other objects. Video stargazers can travel 10,000 years into the past or future to see what the heavens looked like.

UNPARALLELED VARIETY

Peanuts Maze Marathon (Random House/Apple) challenges kids eight and under to guide a Peanuts character through computer-generated random mazes. Successfully completing a maze produces an animated scene.

The Robot Shop (Screenplay/Atari, C-64) lets a computerist build on-screen robots, then program them to perform a variety of tasks.

Ala Software's **Pro Football** (Apple) is a tool for those whose interest in football centers on the daily betting line. The prospective bettor enters team standings and other pertinent statistics, then the program predicts winners and calculates point spreads.

Crossword Magic (Mindscape/Apple, C-64, IBM) offers a fresh approach to crossword puzzling. Electronic pencil-pushers can use this disk to design a totally original puzzle, then print out hard copy of the finished product. As the user types in words, the computer finds suitable locations. The microprocessor keeps track of words that don't fit and calls them up when an appropriate space appears. It even prepares the clue list and prints out an answer key.

CROSSWORD MAGIC (MINDSCAPE)

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS (SPINNAKER)

WIZARD OF OZ (SPINNAKER)

THE COMPUTER CANVAS

The simple mechanics of computer art entertainments let even non-programmers create pictures which use the full color and graphics capabilities of their micros.

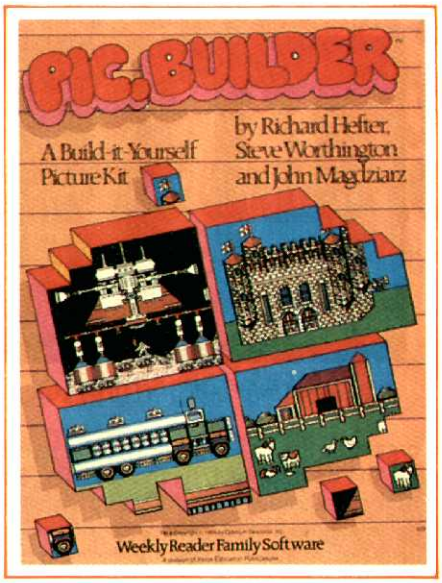
Two types of control systems dominate the art disk field. Most programs use a joystick or a joystick/keyboard combination, but some employ more sophisticated control devices, such as the mouse, light pen and graphics tablet. Besides some built-in pictures to start the ball rolling, most art programs provide drawing assistance for geometric shapes, allow fills of solid colors and/or textures, and let the artist print out a copy of the masterpiece. **Mr. Pixel's Electric Paint Set** (Mindscape/Apple, C-64 IBM PC, IBM PCjr) can be integrated with any of Mindscape's other Pixel programs, such as **Mr. Pixel's Cartoon Kit**, a colorform and animator program that lets users select or build cartoon characters, then combine them into animated featurettes.

Rainbow Painter (Springboard/Most systems) gives kids ages 4-10 a palette with thousands of hues, which are used to color any of the 50 resident pictures, or those which the user designs.

Smurf Paint 'n' Play (Coleco/Adam, ColecoVision) lets one or two kids star up to four Smurf characters in a mini-movie. There are four Smurf-ish backdrops, plus four blank screens for kids to decorate with prepared pictures of flowers, trees and furniture, or original drawings produced with the 15-color palette.

Computer Crayons (Playground/Atari, C-64) is an on-screen coloring book for non-readers. Kids use a joystick or light pen to color a picture for each letter of the alphabet, then call the picture to life with simple animated sequences.

Pic. Builder (Weekly Reader Family Software/Apple, Atari and C-64) uses something very like electronic colorform technology to build pictures from blocks, just like using a construction set. The user


PIC. BUILDER
A Build-it-Yourself Picture Kit
by Richard Hefter, Steve Worthington and John Magdziarz
Weekly Reader Family Software

PIC. BUILDER (WEEKLY READER)

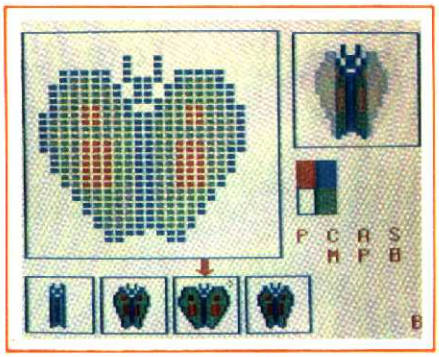
can generate original pictures or use any of the 40 on the disk as a paint-by-numbers set.

Another good all-family art program is **Picture Writer**, by Scarborough Systems (Apple), designed by George Brackett (who also designed *StoryTree* and *Bank Street StoryBook*). A quick-start tutorial makes it easy to learn, and the program uses a joystick or Koala Pad. There's a special sound mode to set the creations to music, or even create colorful musical games. The library of pictures on disk can be used as a coloring book, or can be altered to suit.

Paint Magic, by Mark Riley for Datamost (C-64), is a joystick-operated program that uses 15 colors. Would-be artists can get help drawing straight lines, boxes, circles, rays and points, and can fill areas with solid colors, stripes, tweed, checks, or designs of their own. Scenes can be transposed from one painting to another. There are eleven pictures on disk to get artists started.

The Incredible Pencil was designed by Gary Kitchen for Activision (Atari, C-64).

RAINBOW PAINTER (SPRINGBOARD)



MR. PIXEL'S CARTOON KIT (MINDSCAPE)

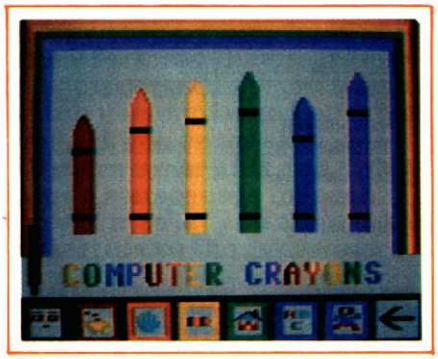
Joystick and menu driven, it assembles pictures and fills in areas of color on command. A random music generator keeps the background noise pleasant, while a quadra-drawing mode reproduces things drawn in one sector in the other three quadrants of the screen to create complex patterns.

MICRO MUSIC-MAKING

The computer is the greatest boon to frustrated musicians since the kazoo. Many of us have music in our souls, but making these internalized tunes accessible to the rest of the world is quite another matter. That takes specialized knowledge.

Music software, which turns the computer keyboard into a synthesizer, helps composers avoid the usual pitfalls by providing systems which can be used by just about anyone to compose a song. Although even untrained tunesmiths can work most programs, several offer advanced features that will appeal most strongly to skilled songwriters. Those who "play by ear" should especially like the programs which print out musical scores, for example.

The easiest music program to use is Christopher Chance's **Dancing Feats** (SoftSync/Atari computer). It can write, record, save and play back compositions, but it is destined to be nearest and dearest to musical illiterates. The novice musician



COMPUTER CRAYONS (PLAYGROUND)

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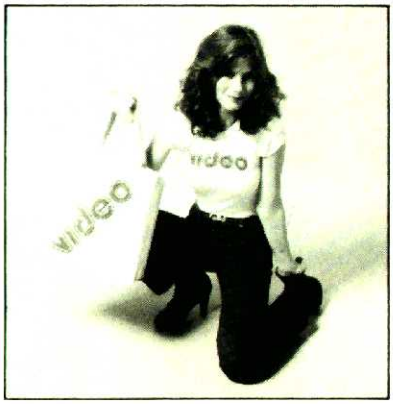

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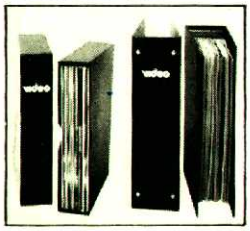

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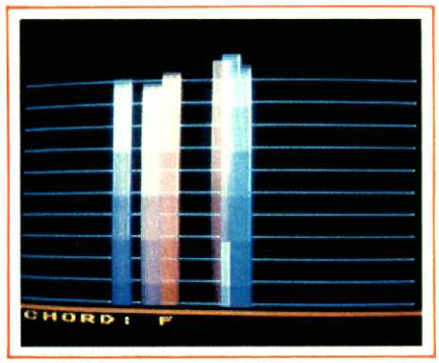
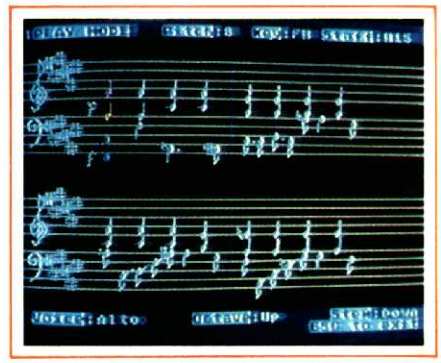


DANCING FEATS (SOFTSYNC)



BANK STREET MUSICWRITER (MINDSCAPE)

organizes the "back up group" by selecting the desired style, tempo and bass line from menus and then noodles up a melody by wiggling the joystick in a (hopefully) inspired manner. *Dancing Feats* defies even a klutz to sound bad.

Composers enter notes by typing them on the keyboard in **Studio 64** (Entech/C-64). The program takes full advantage of the Commodore's three voices, permitting the writer to key in melody, harmony and bass, using eight octaves and varied tones to mimic various instruments. *Studio 64's* music processor works like a word processor. That is, it permits the operator to delete, add, move and revise notes the same way conventional word processors manipulate words.

Bank Street Music Writer (Mindscape/Atari, C-64) positions all notes played on the keyboard on two on-screen staffs. Composers can enter four voices (soprano, alto, bass and tenor), each with an individual volume setting.

A little musical knowledge pays dividends with Richard Wolton's **MusiCalc 1 Synthesizer & Sequencer** (Waveform/C-64). The program writes three-part harmonies using a variety of voices. It features a built-in sequencer, which sets rhythm and controls timing according to the user's instructions. The program includes many pre-set melodies which can be cannibalized in whole or part to make new masterpieces. *MusiCalc* is especially notable for the beauty and clarity of its tones.

The manual for **Songwriter** (Scarborough Systems/Atari) includes a "quick start" section that helps beginners get right into the fun. Musicians can alter or combine songs on disks, or compose with the joystick or keyboard. It comes with instructions and connecting cables to attach the computer to a stereo, but it sounds just fine through the computer's own speakers.

When I'm 64 (Alien Group/C-64) has 21 pre-recorded songs on disk to supplement the original melodies. Options include vibrato, pulse width phasing, and medley. This is different from most other musical programs, since it features an on-screen animated face, mouthing the words. If you have The Voice Box (also from The Alien Group), the computer actually sings along with the melody.

Musicians who crave a piano instead of console keys can purchase keyboard attachments and overlays for even more musical opportunities. HES makes the Sight and Sound Keyboard, an overlay that comes with popular songs which can be played through the computer like a video music machine. Stroke it like a piano and make your own music, or listen to rock and pop hits, each which can be altered to change the sound of the instruments and special effects. Other programs that can be used with the keyboard include Kawasaki **Rhythm Rocker,** which creates sounds and multi-colored graphics. **Tune Trivia** uses the keyboard to play "name that tune", playing up to 20 seconds of an almost unlimited number of songs, then presenting the contestant with a bonus trivia question about music history.

Waveform also makes a high-powered add-on keyboard for computers, turning consoles into powerful musical instruments with full synthesizer capabilities.

This catalog of electronic entertainments makes it pretty obvious that we've come a long way from the days when having fun with computers only meant blasting little green aliens! As computer users become more sophisticated, so is our software.

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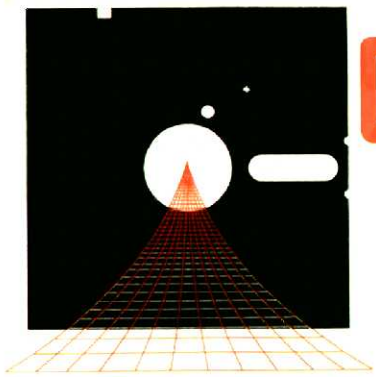

COMPUTER GAMING

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ACTION ARENA

RAID ON BUNGELING BAY

Designed by Will Wright
Broderbund/Commodore 64/Disk

Liberating hostages from the Bungeling prison camp in **Choplifter!** was only one victory in a long war against this digital despotism. Only daring helicopter raids stand a chance against the Bungeling Empire's computerized War Machine.

Carrier-based choppers, available one at a time to a maximum of five, assault enemy factories and defenses with a combination of bombs and missiles. Destroying all six factories earns the player a laudatory newspaper story and a big parade.

The movement system emphasizes the trickiness of steering a copter. Pushing the stick to the left or right causes the ship to rotate in place. Pushing the stick forward accelerates, while pulling it back acts as a combination brake and reverse. A one-second push of the action button lets the ship take off, land, or drop a bomb. Hitting the button rapidly fires missiles.

A status line below the display summarizes valuable information including the score, number of factories and ships remaining, accumulated damage and the location of the carrier relative to the copter's current position. Each ship can absorb up to 100 points of damage, after which it fireballs into oblivion in a satisfying display of animated pyrotechnics. Sometimes, special messages flash across the bottom of the screen to tell the player such things as that the carrier is under attack or that the Bungeling battleship has nearly completed construction and is ready to launch its sea attack against the carrier. Losing the flattop is a crippling blow, since it also scrubs the reserve supply of aircraft.

The game moves at a lightning pace, but there's plenty of opportunity to use strategic thinking. Not only is each new factory harder to level than the last, but facilities two through six each take more than one load of bombs. So after dropping its full complement of nine blockbusters, the copter must race back to the carrier, restock and fly back to the target to finish the job. Bombing can also delay the Bungeling battleship's entry into the war, if you can find its berth in time.

The 100-screen map of the empire is the details of the defense are prominent visually, so there's never a panic over what to show. A radar scope in the lefthand corner further aids selecting the targets.

The components of the War Machine are interrelated, heightening the effect of each attack. Blasting radar stations, for instance, makes it harder for the enemy air force to spot the choppers, and sinking freighters slows productivity at the factories they supply.

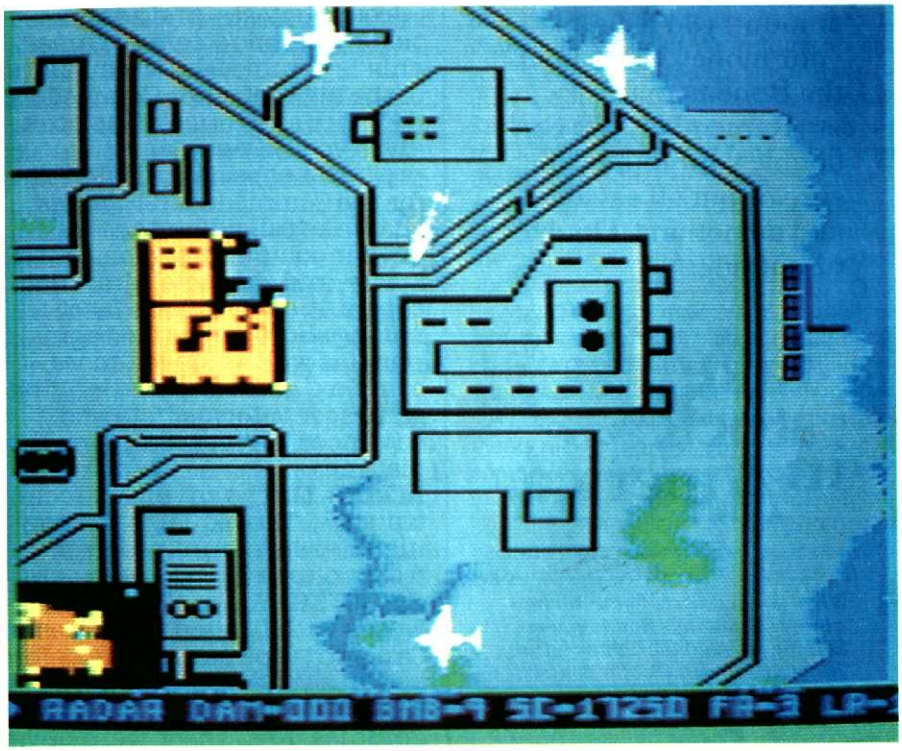
Raid on Bungeling Bay is a riveting blend of fast action and tactical challenge, and as such, it should appeal strongly to blast brigadiers and wargamers alike.

(Arnie Katz)

MOONBEAM ARCADE

Jay M. Ford/Atari computers/32K Disk

Here's an interesting item: a game



RAID ON BUNGELING BAY (BRODERBUND)

with play-mechanics that seem to have been cannibalized from past games that flopped because of them. The graphics are strictly throwbacks in most regards — although a bonus ship does move *through* a mountain range, ducking behind hills before reappearing in the open — and the whole "shooting gallery" idea was washed up two years ago, right?

Yet there's something downright fun about **Moonbeam Arcade**. With the shower of magnificent strategy/action/simulation masterworks filling games libraries nowadays, there's a certain nostalgia that comes with whipping a cursor around a non-scrolling playfield at a target gallery of aliens, moon rovers and flying saucers. The simplicity of aim-and-fire does, after all, make a nice break from landing a Concorde or looting South America for the coffers of Spain.

The base of the screen features craters for no discernable reason, and, above them, robotic aliens move left and right, ducking behind bullet-proof bunkers. The rover moves through the mountains on the horizon line above *that* and a mystery ship zooms through the sky periodically, picking up speed to the point of virtual warp drive after a dozen or so rounds. All targeting and missile launching is carried out via the biggest cursor/site used for a computer game in memory.

What can I say: I like it. So sue me.

(Bill Kunkel)

CAVERNS OF KHAFKA

By Robert T. Bonifacio
Cosmi/Atari computers/48K Disk

This game is not only well designed, laid out and executed, it's even perfectly named. Designer Bonifacio shows a definite Kafka-esque bent with this marvelous exploration maze-game.

Players moved their characters over a scrolling wonderland as densely packed with nooks, crannies, treasures and danger as anything ever seen in the game field. Created along the lines of Synapse's **Pharoah's Curse** and Parker's **Montezuma's Revenge**, there are two big differences from the traditional formula: the immediate manic-panic speed level, and the grotto-laden scenarios so intricately worked out that your orbs may well go into overload-mode at the first glimpse of the jillion treasure troves, death traps and mystery caves. One *does* occasionally get the impression that designer Bonifacio is the kind of guy who

CAVERNS OF KHAFKA (COSMI)

isn't very big on white space. If there's an empty cubic centimeter anywhere in these caverns *I* certainly haven't uncovered it. For purposes of a game such as this, this makes all the difference in the world. Rather than just being one more wander-around-and-find-things game, this Cosmi eye-catcher is a stand-out item holding literally hours of enjoyable play time.

The on-screen surrogate in **Caverns of Khafka** has a little eccentricity that sets him apart from his lode running, junior jumpman contemporaries. Sure he jumps and climbs — I mean, *everybody* jumps and/or climbs in games like this. What's intriguing here is that *crawling* is often a far more valuable skill, zipping along, ducking, then taking off again.

P.S.: It's not true, by the way, that players who do too well at this game sometimes awaken as cockroaches. At least, not *so* far. . .

(Paul Howlan)

PENGO

Atari/Atari computers/Cartridge

This version of **Pengo** is virtually identical to the excellent translation of the Sega coin-op Atari did for the 5200.

The idea is to operate Pengo, the tiny but mean penguin who must evade his predators by sliding around the blocks of ice that give this game its mazelike look — albeit, a rather chilly one. By heaving an ice block and crushing the skewer birds who feast on penguins, points are scored. Some of these big-time ice cubes contain baby predator gulls, waiting to hatch and join the crew harassing Pengo. Peck these blocks before they incubate and bonus points are scored.

A virtually endless sequence of ice mazes keeps the game lively on this first-rate computer translation — a nice blend of action and strategy.

(Will Richardson)

TENNIS

Atari/Atari computers/Cartridge

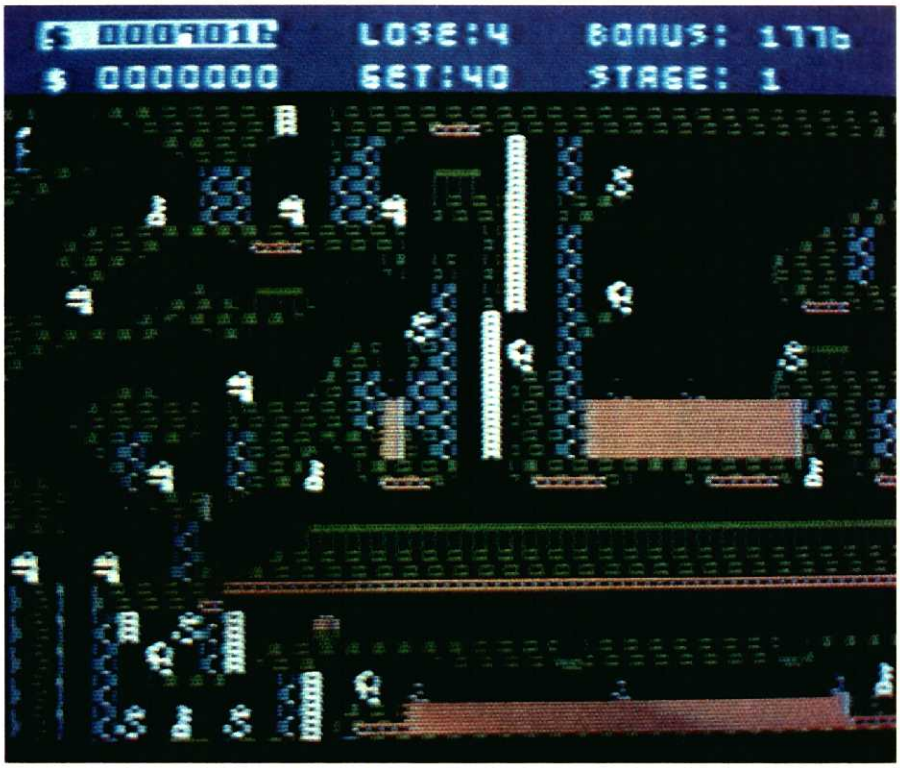
This tennis outing features lots of frills — grandstands and a large loving cup on the title page — and plenty of options, which allow everything from solitaire to doubles. But, to paraphrase a much overused bit of America wisdom: where's the beef?

Sure it's pretty, but it's essentially the same game Activision designed for the VCS three years ago. The computer takes all the shots, meaning human players can't even determine whether to use forehand or backhand! The "action" button is used strictly for serving.

This type of game can only work when the precise point at which ball meets paddle determines where it will travel and at what speed. With its get-near-the-ball-and-it-will-be-returned play-action, playing this game solitaire is like working out with a robot: no matter how good you are, eventually boredom, human error, a lapse of concentration, or some other mortal frailty will force an error. The machine never gets tired.

It looks nice, but looks aren't everything, especially in electronic games. Players want to do something, and much more interaction than **Tennis** provides is needed to make the game really work.

(Paul Howlan)



SATAN'S HOLLOW (COMMODORE)

SATAN'S HOLLOW

Commodore/C-64/Disk

Cross **Galaxian** with **Phoenix,** throw in a dash of "Night on Bald Mountain" and you've got the idea behind **Satan's Hollow,** Commodore's translation of the Bally/Midway coin-op. The play-mechanic was a bit overused even when the game was first introduced to arcades, but what set *Satan's Hollow* apart from the competition were its brilliantly-colored visual frills. Though the C-64 disk doesn't *exactly* duplicate the arcade game's stunning backgrounds, this version is still the prettiest game of its genre — especially on the home screen.

The object of *Satan's Hollow* is to build a bridge across a chasm separating the Evil One's realm from the world at large. Players control a cannon that moves left or right across the bottom of the screen. A flock of evil dragonets, minions of the Dark Lord, chitters overhead, dropping deadly bombs and occasionally swooping down in a kamikaze dive-bomb. A quick pull on the joystick activates a shield to get players out of really tight scrapes.

Whenever the gamer blasts a dragonet, a bridge corner appears in the corner of the screen. The player must use the cannon to tow the bridge segment across the playfield, then position it at the bridge site. To earn another bridge segment, players have to shoot another dragonet.

When the bridge is complete the action proceeds to an anticlimactic second screen in which a crude devil's head circles overhead, spewing huge fireballs down at the cannon in a final, kill-or-be-killed showdown.

This is an 1982 arcade title, and the game is definitely showing its age. Still, players interested in aquiring a **Space Invaders** or *Phoenix*-style shoot-out will find a real eye pleaser in *Satan's Hollow.*

(Tracie Forman)

KING'S RANSOM

Nufetop/VIC-20/Cassette

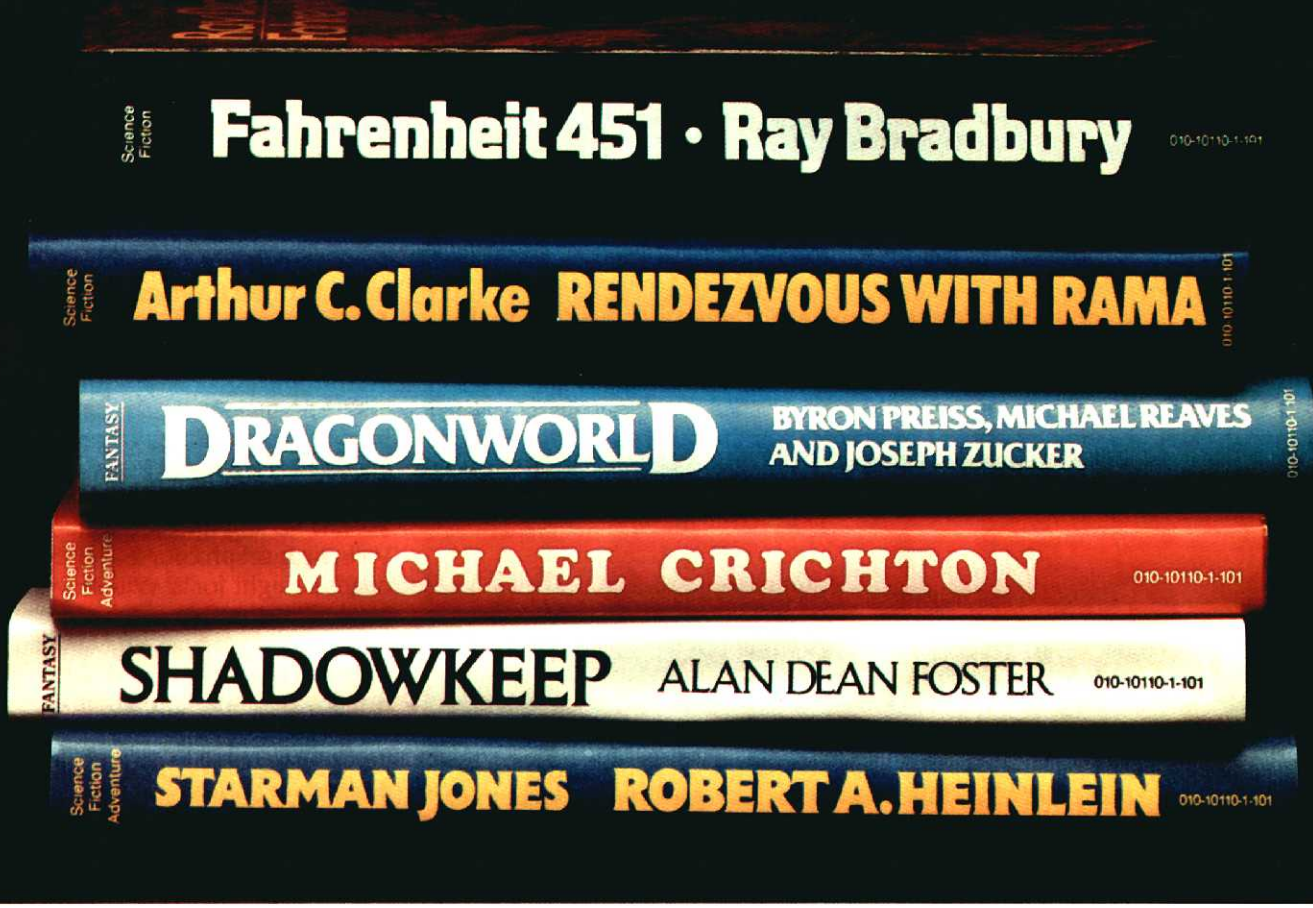
The instruction booklet for **King's Ransom** has a longer-than-average introduction, "The Thirteenth King." It's an atmospheric fable about a power-hungry monarch who dared to buy a place among the gods with money obtained from unjust and oppressive taxes. Instead, he sold his soul to the devil, and was doomed to an eternity in his own personal hell, chasing after the gold coins that he had unfairly taken during his life. It's a grim, involving story that's written well enough to create some excitement for the game coming up. And then the author drops the moral: "There is only one true bargain worth striking. . . This game at $16.95." That's the way to wreck a mood, isn't it?

Oh well, boot the tape and enjoy the game, anyway. *King's Ransom* takes place in a nightmare world of flames and monsters. By using a joystick to move the king left and right, the gamer must travel across four levels of sliding platforms while picking up the gold coins that drop from above. Although the platforms move, the king remains stationary while standing upon them. If the player doesn't hit the action button to jump the gaps that show up on occasion, the on-screen hero drops from one level to the next. Falling from the lowest level means a drop into a pit of flames at the bottom of the screen and loss of one "life."

That's not the only peril the player faces. Dropping down from the top, and rising up from the flames are an assortment of "undead," ghosts and skeletons that rest against either the top or the bottom of the platforms and block the movement of the king. They don't actively chase the king, but as the game progresses, more and more of these ghouls fill the screen. Very often the king ends up bracketed by two of the undead, rendering him incapable of moving until an opening slides underneath to drop him down a level (and possibly into the fiery pit).

At first glance, *King's Ransom* is deceptively simple. Using a custom graphics set, the visuals are well-done but basic, with some especially nice shading for the platforms. The soundtrack consists essentially of a couple of beeps and a subtly modulated primal drumbeat that plays at an almost subliminal volume. The entire contest is played at one level that continues until it ends.

King's Ransom is a challenge out of proportion to its appearance. About the only thing that gets in the way of fully enjoying the game is a slightly sluggish joystick response that is particularly obtrusive when trying to jump



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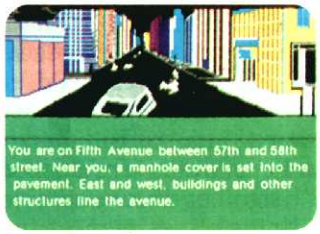
You are on Fifth Avenue between 57th and 58th street. Near you, a manhole cover is set into the pavement. East and west, buildings and other structures line the avenue.

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the larger gaps in the platforms. The delay is slow enough so that, instead of reaching the other side, the king either winds up falling to a lower level or frying himself in the flames.

This is an intriguing, offbeat little contest that is beholden to no other acrade or home game. It might not be enough to topple **Zork I** or **Choplifter** from the ten-best lists, but it is worth a look by devoted gamers.

(Dan Persons)

RESCUE ON FRACTALUS

Designed by Lucasfilm
Atari/Atari computers/32K Cartridge

Rescue on Fractalus creates a mini-George Lucas science fiction epic starring you, the player, as the new Luke Skywalker. Everything is there: dynamic, breath-stopping special effects, a fleshed-out storyline, action coming out the wazoo and even a John Williams-style musical score to send gamers out behind Jaggi lines in the properly-inspired frame of mind.

If **Ballblazer** (the other half of this Atari-Lucas double feature) is a high-tech sporting extravaganza set in the far future, *Fractalus* is a genuine rescue/blastout adventure with an involvement level that has not been seen before in a computer simulation.

Gamers pilot an awesome assault craft dubbed the "Valkyrie", viewing the exotic locales through an angled, three-window transparent shield. The console is similarly tri-parted. The left board consists of flashing rows of light, and the right panel contains a sequence of three lights indicating airlock status, as well as three vital readouts. "R" is the rangefinder — the number of miles the Valkyrie is from a downed Terran craft. "E" compiles the number of dead aliens chalked up, and "P" signifies the number of pilots which the player must rescue in order to return to the mothership and take a symbolic elevator ride to the next level.

The center of the Valkyrie's dashboard contains some *really* interesting stuff. There's the circular gauge that keeps constant track of the ship's angle of incline to the left or right. Next is a high vertical altimeter — the mission, consisting as it does of picking up stranded pilots whose ships were downed by the hostile Jaggi, is dependent upon keeping just the right altitude. Behind Jaggi lines, the aliens have established anti-aircraft, laser-firing bunkers atop the mountainous terrain of the planet Fractalus. If the gamer's ship is too high, it can't land in order to pick up the downed spacemen. On the other hand, come in too low and the craft must run a virtual gauntlet of ack-ack attacks.

The energy meter sits to the right of the radar-siting screen and, to *its* right, perhaps the most significant piece of hi-tech assistance available to a pilot: a combination landing aid and device for picking up life readings. In other words, your screen may pick up another Valkyrie buried in the Fractalus' dust, but if it doesn't register on the life reader, there's nothing *human* inside it . . .heh heh heh.

This sort of leads up to one of the game's most mind-blasting touches — something so good, I wouldn't even give it away but for the fact that it will scare the CPU out of you — even when you *know* it's coming! See, as the Valkyrie blasts off through one of the mothership's score of launch tubes, it first emerges into space, then begins its immediate, pre-programmed descent past the planet's blazing sun right down to the perilous, jagged-peaked surface of Fractalus (named, by the way, after the innovative use of fractile geometry that allowed designers Carpenter, Fox and Co. to create an entire planet without having to feed a map to the computer).

Within the planet's atmosphere, the instrumentation goes immediately into action, looking for Jaggi (never hard to find since they're generally trying to turn Valkyries into spare parts) and crashed ships with living pilots aboard. Using the life detector, the Valkyrie is set on course and the player heads straight for it. Within a range of two miles, the ship can be landed. As long as the engines remain on, the turret can be turned in order to bring the downed ship into sight. But until the engines shut down, the Jaggi can also spot the craft and have a field day blowing it apart. Once the engines are killed, a pilot, in complete space gear, comes running toward the gamer's ship. Wait a second to make sure he knocks. If he does, open the airlock. The sounds of the rescued flyer's boots clanging against the airlock floor then recede, the grateful pilot shuts the door, and Valkyrie is ready to take off again.

However . . . sometimes the pilot emerging from that crumpled Terran craft is not human at all, but a Jaggi in disguise. He doesn't knock. This dude just pops up in front of the ship's portal, big as life, twice as ugly, and three times as heart-stopping. Unless the

RESCUE ON FRACTALUS (ATARI/LUCASFILM)

player then guns the engines, blows away the hulk of the Valkyrie left in the dust, and takes off *fast*, the Jaggi procedes to smash in the windshield and end the game in a most unpleasant manner.

Also, for the impatient among us, those players who don't wait for that tell-tale knock may inadvertantly let an alien on board. The Jaggie will then turn gremlin, tearing apart and disabling the Valkyrie piece by piece. Should this happen, get back home to momma — *immediately!*

Once you've worked your way around this game for a while and commit to memory exactly which keys (on the Atari keyboard, that is) activate the airlock, the engines, retro-rockets, etc., you'll find yourself around level seventeen with a great new element awaiting: day turns to night at higher levels! Nighttime firefights are as spectacular as anything Lucas has done on film and, as they used to say on the old TV shows: "You are there!"

Rescue on Fractalus is a masterpiece that, if anything, is being critiqued with less effusive praise than it actually deserves. But, frankly, if a simple description of the game — and a quick look at the full-dimensional imagery the graphics provide — doesn't sell you, then nothing will.

This is a *hot* number.

(Bill Kunkel)

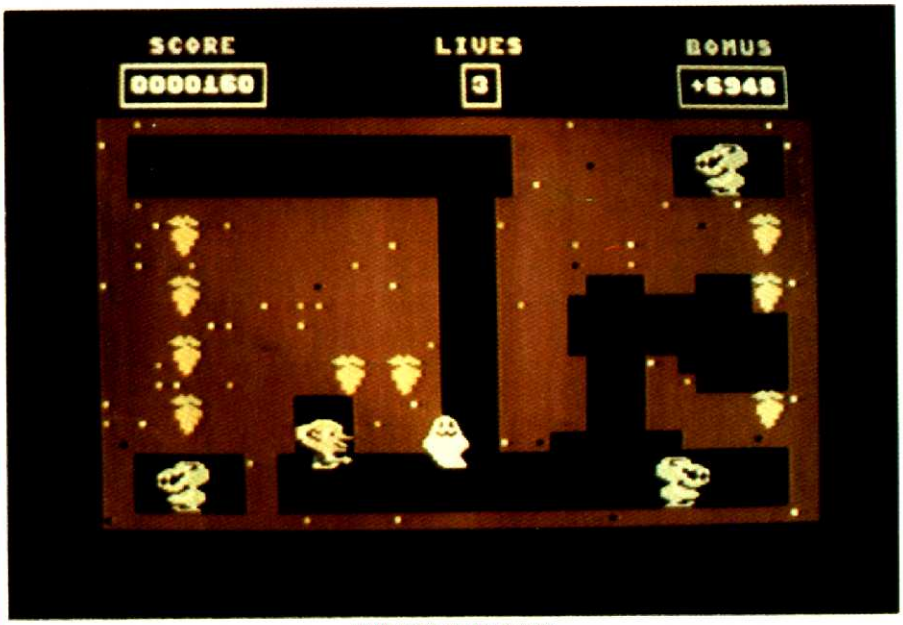
PIXIE PETE

Merlin/Commodore 64/Disk

In this fifteen level, one-player game that could be described as **Dig Dug** meets **Mr. Do.,**" arcaders use a joystick to maneuver Pixie Pete as he searches for carrots, and avoids Desmond the Dragon by digging his own mazes. This freestyle pattern doesn't mean players can go where they wish. On the contrary, the passages can only be dug at certain obscure points. Trying to dig anywhere else is like trying to grow marigolds on the moon.

Gamers earn a bonus by completing a level before the on-screen clock counts down to zero. First, all the edibles must be taken, then the fiery ones have to be blown up with the handy-dandy, fire button-activated hydraulic ram pump, Sound familiar?

Once dispatched, a lizard returns as Gorgo the Ghost. He, too, can be inflated to oblivion, but unlike his ancestor, he's not restricted to previously burrowed passageways. He's a real free spirit!



PIXIE PETE (MERLIN/3R)

The pixie has a jaunty walk which keeps his eyes bouncing up and down. The ghost has character (though somewhat nebulous), and Desmond looks as if he's only mean when playing the game. All of them are absolutely first-class.

However, the sound effects don't push the 64 to anywhere near its limits, the background graphics aren't anything to get excited about, and the play-action is uninspired.

As a mixture of two hits, **Pixie Pete** tries to offer the best of both worlds. Unfortunately, it doesn't deliver.

(Ted Salamone)

STAR WARS

Parker Brothers/C-64/Cartridge

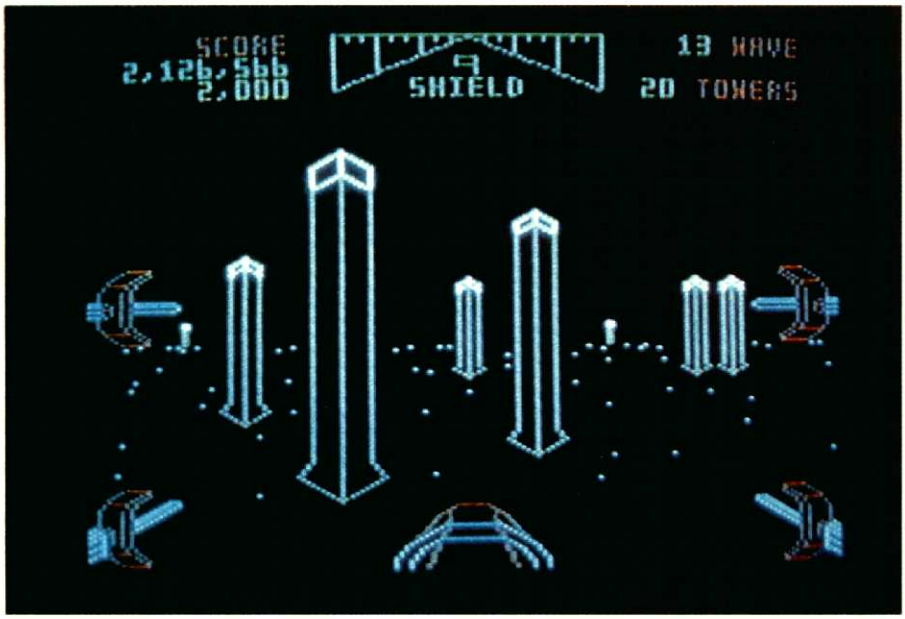
"Star Wars" was an extremely successful movie, and the coin-op based on the Death Star Battle sequence was one of the most popular games in the arcades. It's only natural that a home game with such a popular title will do pretty well, too.

This home translation of the hit Atari game has all the features of the coin-op, even down to a good imitation of the game's vector graphics. The first screen is an outer-space dogfight, with Tie-fighters attacking from every angle. The spacecraft, and their shield-draining laser blasts, must be eliminated in order to reach the next sequence: the Death Star itself.

Once inside the trench, gamers must either avoid or shoot the blasts of laser fire from defense turrets. The turrets themselves can be blasted out of commission, though they're tiny targets indeed. When the tiny hatch—the one Achilles heel of the Death Star—comes into view, simply line up the shot, let go with a missile, and hope the Force is with you!

Players who successfully blow up the Death Star are faced with another Tie-fighter sequence, and surviving the shoot-out brings the hero to the Tower screen. Here, the object is to maneuver between towers, shooting

"This home edition of Star Wars has all features of the coin-op down to the graphics."



STAR WARS (PARKER)—ATARI COMPUTER VERSION

out their gunnery, and avoid stray laser fire.

There are only two things missing from the game, and despite an excellent job by Parker Brothers, they detract from the game's enjoyment. The first, of course, is Obi-Wan's spoken encouragement ("Use the Force, Luke!"), which really contributes to the "Star Wars" atmosphere. The second is the controller itself: on the coin-op, a huge, maneuverable steering wheel adds to the hotdogging space acrobatics. With it, players really feel like they're sitting in the craft's cockpit. A normal joystick is too mundane for such a major mission.

Even without the coin-op's expensive razzle-dazzle, **Star Wars** is a thoroughly likeable action contest. It's too bad that a *Star Wars*-style joystick isn't available to complete the effect in an other wise fine game.

(Tracie Forman)

TRANSLATIONS

PAC-MAN

Atarisoft/VIC-20/Cartridge

Chances are good that if players want **Pac-Man** for the VIC-20, they'll go out and buy this Atarisoft adaptation no matter what is written here. After all, the critics tore into the 2600 cartridge, but that didn't stop millions of avid fans from running out and purchasing a decidedly inferior adaptation.

The folks at Atari have made an earnest effort at translating the Bally/Namco arcade classic to the technically unsophisticated VIC. The animation and detailing are quite good, while the *Pac-Man* theme and all the sound effects have been faithfully reproduced. Power pills, ghosts, bonus fruit, scrolling tunnels—they're all there. About the only thing that's been left out are the intermissions, but that's excusable.

If only it played as good as it looked. The joystick response is so poor that accurate maneuvering is almost impossible. At times, the little gobbler seems to have a mind of his own, missing turns, going off in the wrong direction, and usually wandering exactly where you don't want him: right into the waiting arms of the ghosts. In fact, it's not an exaggeration to say that joystick control in this version is at least as bad as that of the notorious 2600 *Pac-Man*. The situation is compounded by a maze that has been simplified to the point where there are very few routes of escape if you happen to find yourself on a collision course with Inky, Blinky, Pinky, or Clyde.

In attempting to bring as much of the sight and sound home as possible, the folks at Atari have sacrificed *Pac-Man's* gameplay. However, players who get it home are liable to discover that playing just isn't the joy that it should be.

(Dan Persons)

OIL'S WELL

Sierra/IBM PCjr/64K Disk

Sierra's **Oil's Well** has proven to be the dark horse of gaming in 1984. It was released in cartridge form for the Atari computer with a minimum of fanfare, but Sierra eventually realized that just about everybody who played the game fell in love with it, often becoming obsessed with reaching "just one more level!"

Since then, it has appeared on more and more home systems, the suddenly-popular PCjr among the most recent additions. Alas, this is *not* the sort of game the Jr is best at running. The joysticks cause more trouble than they should, and in this contest of digging through a series of tunnels, grabbing ore and zipping out before something nasty hits the pipeline or drill-head, a totally comfortable controller is a necessity.

Otherwise, the graphics are quite nice — rich and full-colored — and when the stick responds, it does so quite well, the main problem being short series of multi-directional turns. If you own a PCjr and like arcade-style games, I would recommend this one unhesitatingly.

(Bill Kunkel)

DONKEY KONG JR.

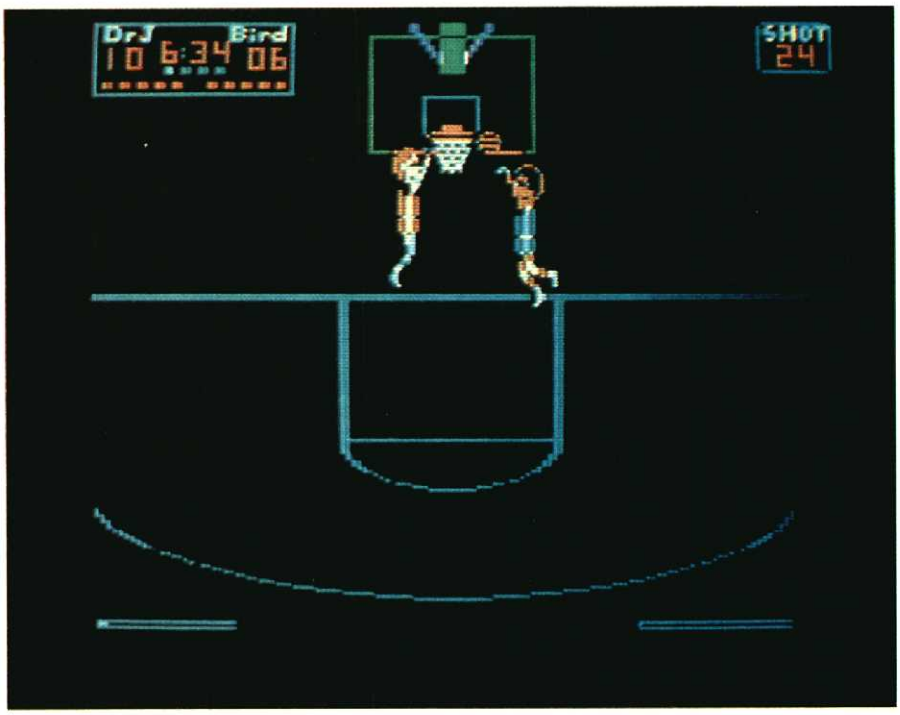
Atari/Atari computers/Cartridge

If you like **Donkey Kong Jr.**, this translation for the Atari computers should send you climbing into seventh heaven. Everything from the arcade game is here and the animation, especially of Jr., is simply outstanding. The play is smooth as silk and even non-fans will find themselves giving this game a shot, if only to find out where it's all going.

Of course, Junior's going after Daddy Kong himself, captured by the intrepid Mario (who turns up to harrass Jr. personally on scenario two) and carted off to the circus. Junior must climb a series of hanging objects, patrolled everywhere by toothy beasts, leap from rope to rope, and manage to drop fruit in hopes of bonking, and thereby erasing, an antagonist.

This is the game you know, and as a translation, it is a first-class piece of work.

(Bill Kunkel)



ONE ON ONE (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

ONE-ON-ONE

Electronic Arts/Atari computers/48K Disk

How popular is **One-on-One** going to be in Atari computer format? Only popular enough for EA to hold up its release for six months in order to copy protect it from existing program-duplication software.

All the elements that gamers fell in love with in the Apple and C-64 versions of this one- or two-player contest matching computer versions of Larry Bird against Dr. J (Julius Erving) are here in the Atari version — with bells on! Head-to-head or against the computer, *One-on-One* is *magnificent*, and *especially* so in this quick-loading Atari format.

Again, there are slo-mo replays of extraordinary points, foul shots, and even a backboard that can be shattered (bringing a little maintainance man out of the wings with a can and broom to sweep up the remnants and scold the offending roundballer).

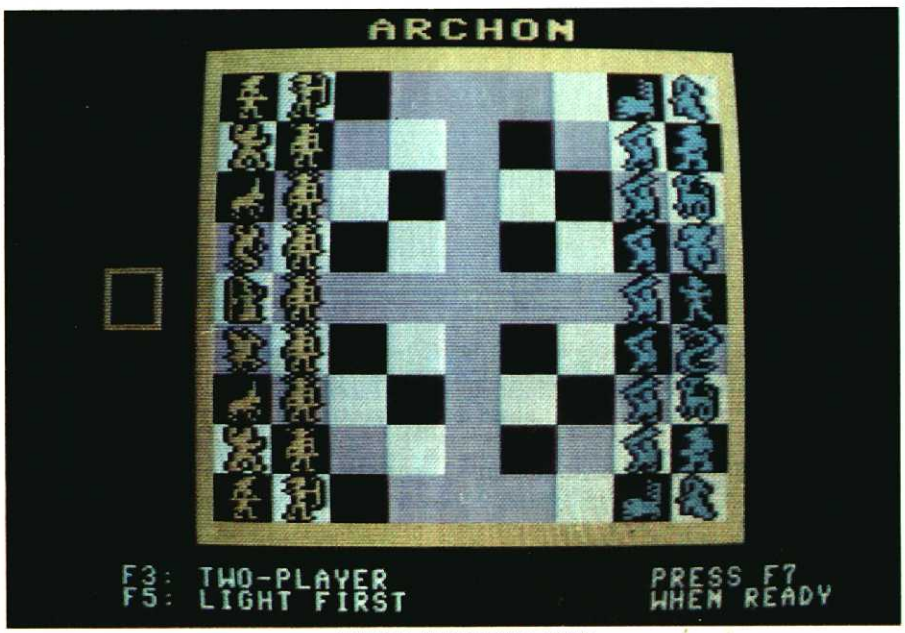
An absolute must-have for anyone even remotely interesting in computerized sports simulations.

(Bill Kunkel)

ARCHON

By Freefall Associates
Electronic Arts/C-64/Disk

EG's 1984 Arcade Award winner (Most Innovative Game) has not only survived the transition from Atari to Commodore with all its excellent play-value intact, but this new version of **Archon** is actually an improvement.



ARCHON (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

The main difference is the graphics: while the Atari version's playfield was relatively colorless, with the game icons drawn a bit confusedly, the Commodore translation sports a bright, sharp playfield and game characters outlined in black. While the Atari disk is closer to the designers' original concept, most players will agree that this version is much nicer to look at.

The other major change is the color of the playfield itself: in the Atari game, the board's squares cycle from dark blue to light blue to white, then reverse for the next cycle. Because of a technical quirk in the Commodore configuration, the single-color shift was impossible. Instead, the board cycles through a number of different colors, each of which indicates a different color phase. The color shifts take a bit of learning to get down pat, but after a few games, most players will have the color cycle memorized.

As in the Atari version, this one- or two-player game challenges the armies of Dark and Light on a chess-like board. Each army consists of different character icons (the Light has a un-

icorn, while the Dark has a shape-shifter, for example), and despite the differences, each army is pretty equal in terms of strength. The game is a battle for possession of the five flashing Power Points, located strategically on the board. Whoever succeeds in occupying all five squares — or vanquishing every character on the opposing side — wins the game.

Archon has always been an exciting game to play. In its new Commodore 64 form, it's now also exciting to watch!

(Tracie Forman)

SPARE CHANGE

Broderbund/Atari computers/48K Disk

Spare Change is a true gaming rarity: It's loaded with play-value, but is charming enough to prompt a chuckle or two.

The Atari translation is sterling, utilizing the computer's graphics and sound to the max. As in previous versions, the player is cast as an arcade owner plagued by Zerks — weird little gremlin-like creatures who live in the videogames. The Zerks are busy collecting tokens from the various machines and from the owner's token bin, then tossing, kicking or slam-dunking them into their own little piggy bank at the lower right-hand corner of the screen. If they accumulate 4 tokens in the bank, during a round of play they buy their "freedom" and your game is over.

The player, meanwhile, must similarly collect tokens and store them in the bin, while periodically running to the safe and grabbing coins to restock the dispenser. The Zerks can be distracted in any number of ways — becoming more and more ingenious and entertaining as the player progresses from level to level — but the surest shot is the juke box. Dump a token in the music machine and watch the Zerks catch dance fever. While they disco the night away, your on-screen surrogate is free to go about his business. (Collect enough tokens and buy a "Zerk Show" — a mini-coin-op that features the Zerks in a series of skits.)

This is a game with wit as well as good gameplay. More fun than a barrel of Zerks, *Spare Change* belongs in the library of any fun-loving Atari game player.

(Bill Kunkel)

PASSPORT TO ADVENTURE

KING'S QUEST

Sierra/IBM/128K Disk

Don't be fooled by the unimaginative title. **King's Quest** is a major breakthrough in action-adventure games. The quest itself is clean-cut and simple — an excellent primer for the novice adventurer — but its combination of keyboard-input and *joystick-operated* on-screen character movement blows everything away, even coin-op action contests such as **Crossbow**. You've never seen anything like *King's Quest* before on *any* system — it's a positive revelation on the PCjr!

The action begins with the on-screen player surrogate finding himself outside the walls of a gorgeous, high-turetted castle. The sky is a majestic bright blue, and the multi-colored pennants high above the stone barricades flutter regally in the breeze.

Now, using a joystick, the hero is moved (*very* carefully) over a wooden bridge and then west along the side of a crocodile-infested moat. Crossing the drawbridge and reaching the door, the gamer than types in: "open door", and, *voila!* trumpets sound as the twin oak doors swing inward, revealing the castle's interior.

Returning to the joystick, the adventurer steps down the corridor, past beautifully woven tapestries and suits of armor, to an audience with the King (using cinematic techniques, designer Roberta Williams depicts this scrolling progression through more than one point of view). His Majesty then spits out the details of the quest with very little prompting.

Accepting the task ahead, the adventurer doffs his cap and bows with a flourish (check it out, he really *does*!) and heads back outside to explore the beautiful countryside in search of the King's desire.

Players get to move through a wide variety of still and semi-animated sequences, with each of the hero's movements under the gamer's direct control. We get lakes, rapids, mountains, green fields, squalid huts — even ogres (you're more lover than fighter in this contest, and the best results

KING'S QUEST (SIERRA)

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If you have trouble finding ELECTRONIC GAMES at your local newsstand or want to know where to send a friend to pick up a copy, the following will help. It's a list of retail stores across the country that carry ELECTRONIC GAMES every month.

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The Crossings Video Shop Inc., Miami
Jeff Vid Inc./DBA Video Club Center, Miami
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Video Trends, Winter Haven

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Video Rangers Inc., Morton Grove
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Classic Video, Oak Lawn
Sound Warehouse, Oak Lawn
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NEW HAMPSHIRE
Video Biz of New Hampshire, Bedford
Home Video Shop, Seabrook
Video Station Inc., South Merrimack

NEW JERSEY
Software City, Bergenfield
Video Aids Inc., Bloomfield
Video Vision, Bridgeton
Trash Or Treasure, Budd Lake
Gemini Enterprises, Cedar Knolls
Video Connection, Cherry Hill
O'Johnnies, Clark
Accent On Video, Closter
Video Store, Elmwood Park
Video Trek, Fort Lee
Camera Video Showplace, Freehold
Nu-Video, Lakewood
Video Junction Inc., Leonia
Video Home Center, Maralapan
Video Track, Marlboro
DC Video Inc., Manasquan
Ippy's, Manasquan
Video Studio, Metuchen
Video Access, North Bergen
Video Fantasy, Palisades Park
Stan's Discount Energy & Video, Penns Grove
Record Record, Pompton Lakes
Software City, Ridgefield
Video Connection, Somerset
Video Station, Somerset
Software Store Inc., Somerville
Video Galaxy, Turnerville
Captain Video Inc., Vineland
Opening Night Video, Wayne
Video Odyssey Inc., Woodbridge
Video Valance, Woodridge

NEW YORK
Video Connection, Albany
Videovision, Baldwin
Future Video, Bayside
Video Visions, Bayside
Videotronics, Bronx
Discount Book Warehouse, Brooklyn
Ekron Systems, Brooklyn
Flatbush Video, Brooklyn
Parkway Video & Electronics, Brooklyn
Taso's Video Fair, Brooklyn
Video Store, Brooklyn
Video Connection, Cedarhurst
Moriches Vantage Mart, Center Moriches
Video Emporium, Coram
Anytime Video, Deer Park
Video Connection, Delmar
Video Connection, Derby
Video Connection, East Northport
Video Quest, Elmont
Tanel Electronics, Floral Park
Video Network, Floral Park
Audio Video Barn, Blushing
Video Network Center, Flushing
Video Wizard Inc., Flushing
Magic Video, Forest Hills
Video Statio, Forest Hills
NSB Video, Franklin Square
Big Apple Video, Glendale
Video Etc., Great Neck
Huntington Video & Computer, Huntington Sta
Video Enterprise, Kenmore
ACE Camera Shop, Lawrence
Castle Video Inc., Lindenhurst
Kaleidoscope, Liverpool
Delman Television Co., Long Beach
L V R Video, Manhasset
Ankar Video Inc., Merrick
Video Connection, Merrick
Video Connection, Middle Village
HM Electronics, Nanuet
Captain Video, New City
Future Video, New Hyde Park
Leigh's Computers, New York
Mau Corp. New York
Video Connection, New York
Software Supply Int'l. Inc., Niagara Falls
Ozone Park Video, Ozone Park
Commander Video, Port Chester
Video Adventure, Pound Ridge
Video Breakthrough, Riverhead
Video Den, Scarsdale
Video Entertainment, Sidney
J N P Electronics, Staten Island
Video Galactica, Staten Island
Video Station, Suffern
Video Connection, Sunnyside
Video Connection, Tonawanda
Selgen Enterprises, Valley Stream
Fireside Video, White Plains
Video Village, Whitestone
Silver Dollar Coin Co., Woodhaven
Video Supermarket, Woodhaven
Big Apple Music, Yorkville

NORTH CAROLINA
Video Station, Asheville
21st Century Video, Durham
Video Connection, Goldsboro
Video Connection, Greensboro
Rainbow Records, Morehead City
Hardins Magnavox Home Ent., Shelby

OHIO
M & B Video Store, Akron
Video Replay, Akron
Future Now, Cincinnati
Video Depot, Cleveland
Magic Castle Video, Columbus
Video Game Express, Columbus
Video Plus Inc., Garfield Hts.
Home Video Library, Middletown
American Video, North Olmsted
Cartridge Connection, Proctorville
Calypso Video, Toledo
Silver Screen Video, Wickliffe
Video Den, Willoughby

OKLAHOMA
Video Comp. Inc., Lawton

OREGON
Capital Audio Systems, Salem

PENNSYLVANIA
Captain Video Center Store #10, Aston
Video Connection, Dresher
Video Store, Levittown
Home Video Center Inc., Newton Square
Tonidale Arcade, Oakdale
Software Plus, Philadelphia
Video Games Plus, Philadelphia
The Video Inn, Philadelphia
Video Connection, Quakertown
International Video York, York

PUERTO RICO
Video Vision #59, Guaynabo

RHODE ISLAND
Video Connection, Johnston
Video City, Providence

SOUTH CAROLINA
Carolina Video Center Inc., Charleston
Game Exchange, Greenwood
All That's Video, Spartanburg

TENNESSEE
Radio Service Center, Nashville
Video World, Nashville
Totally Video, Smyrna
Sneaky Snakes Elect., Somerville

TEXAS
TV Center, Abilene
Pantego TV, Arlington
Vid-Com, Brownsville
Video Rainbow, Forth Worth
Wedgewood Rental, Fort Worth
Audio Video Plus, Houston
VI-AM Video & Bookstore, Houston
TV Games Limited, Midland
M & M Elect. Sales & SVC, Synder
Lonestar Video Rentals, Vidor

VERMONT
Video Connection, Brattleboro

VIRGINIA
Video Station, Alexandria
Mr. Franco Printing & Newsstand, Arlington
Video Shop Inc., Manassa
Video Station, Roanoke
Video Express, Virginia Beach
Combs Distributing, Winchester

WASHINGTON
Video Space, Bellevue
Kent Video & Computers, Kent
Platnium Sound, Seattle
Video Int'l. Corp./DBA Video Hut, Seattle

WEST VIRGINIA
Computers Plus Inc., Charleston
Tronix, Charleston

WISCONSIN
Video Exchange, Glendale
Phantasy Age Inc., Lacrosse
Total Eclipse, Mehomonee Falls
Ford Theatre Home Video, Racine
Galaxy TV Games, Racine
Drakes Super Valu, Salem
Video Place, South Milwaukee

WYOMING
Clark Co., Cheyenne

CANADA
Video Games Galore, Courtney, British Columbia
Home & Business Computer Ctr., Mississauga, Ontario
Future Shop, Vancourver, British Columbia
Riverside Products, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory
Red River Book Shop, Winnipeg, Manitoba

against such creatures is simply to pay them off, so keep both eyes open for bribe-worthy treasure) and troll bridges. Roberta has given us a panorama for future adventure games to draw upon, taking our breath away at times with the elegant beauty of her work.

The software package includes a cardboard overlay (folded, so it never fits quite right) that can be placed over the keyboard — the old keypad-style board, anyway. We've recieved no word as of press time as to whether the overlay fits the restyled keyboard. Though most of the characters are unchanged, this nonetheless comes in very handy for specific orders that will be given with some frequency. For example, when the player jumps into the water, it's possible to type in: "swim", but it's a lot less uncertain to simply jab the "swim" key — especially in turbulent water, where the sarcastic narrator is likely to inform you that "apparently, you've forgotten how to swim. Thanks for playing King's Quest." That last sentence is the program's way of informing a luckless voyager that your character is now playing a harp or shoveling brimstone.

Again, as a pure adventure it would hardly be worth a second glance. But in simplifying the puzzle-solving and **Zork**-like elements and, instead, overwhelming the player with lush graphics and joystick control over the hero, the vistas of adventure gaming suddenly open to a whole new audience.

(Bill Kunkel)

DEATH IN THE CARIBBEAN

Micro Fun/Apple, Atari, C-64/Disk

When death takes a holiday, what better place to choose than a nameless Caribbean island that runs to quicksand, voodoo and swamps rather than Holiday Inns? This fine graphic adventure sends gamers on the Cooks tour, and while there's not much hope of a tan, there is the possibility of treasure and a dead certainty of danger and tight scrapes.

Death in the Caribbean sets the computerist down in front of a house "with map in hand." Returning to the house for a good read and a nap is out of the question. The only thing to do is to head north into unknown territory. It was generous of Micro Fun to provide a map, thus relieving adventurers of the necessity of scrawling their own, but it is not as much help as it could be. At times, trying to correlate the on-screen description, the picture and the map presents an almost insurmountable logistical problem. At some point in the adventure, gamers will find themselves confronted with the picture of the front of a church dead ahead (and seemingly due North) and the on-screen information, "You are north of the old church." Looking at the map will reveal that the church doors can be reached only by going east. No matter, the doors are locked anyway. But be sure to visit the graveyard (out of deference to the title character) before heading out in search of the key.

There are some nice humorous touches in this game. If the player gets confused and keeps ending up in the same place, or tries an illegal move, a ghost with a disapproving expression drifts across the screen. He has no patience with shilly-shallying around, and if really aroused, he'll steal and hide one of the gamer's possessions: "I have hidden the key," for example. It is best not to push him too far, or it may take days just to retrieve things.

The graphics are nicely done, if a bit repetitive. The island scenery is appropriately lush and tropical and objects vanish from the screen quickly when taken by the adventurer. The program recognizes commands with one verb and one noun, so if a gamer types "Climb down the cliff with the rope," the response will be "Climb down what?" or "With what?" This is no more than to be expected from a graphic adventure, and the lag time between command and scene change is not overly long.

This is not an adventure which will be solved successfully in one shot—just adjusting to the scale (or lack of it) of the map takes some time. However, it's easier to annotate the map provided than to attempt drawing one from scratch. Once the gamer gets used to the territory the only problem is staying alive long enough to explore all of it. There are few paths that are not broken by some hazard, including crevasses, cliffs and man-eating ants. The adventurer, like the proverbial coward, can die a thousand deaths—without even making it from one side of the island to the other. None of these ends are pleasant and all of them are final, although the gamer can hit the return key and reincarnate at the beginning each time.

As graphic adventures go, *Death in the Caribbean* is a very good one, although not exactly state-of-the-art.

DEATH IN THE CARIBBEAN (MICRO FUN)

You'll have to keep your wits and *read carefully*. And don't expect things to work out the same way each time you come across them. There's this trap door, for instance—well, you'll have to find it yourself. Don't say you weren't warned!

(Louise Kohl)

BOUNTY HUNTER

Victory Software/Adam/ Data Storage Pack

The first adventure game for Adamites is one of the most disappointing we've seen all year. It's not surprising the publisher released the game for this system, since the all-text BASIC adventure would be a joke to anyone who's ever played a contest of this type. **Bounty Hunter** might have been state-of-the-art three or four years ago, but thankfully adventure gaming has made great strides since then.

Bounty Hunter is set in the Old West, and the player's mission is to track down and arrest the infamous Oil Brothers. The game is packaged in a cassette box, with all instructions printed on the back of the label. Players type in simple two-word commands, like "Go Door" or "Get Key" (although the computer only really reads the first two letters of each word).

The plot is completely linear, meaning that each major obstacle must be overcome to reach the next point in the game, with no alternate routes in most cases. To make matters worse, the program talks down to the player, with cutesy touches like "I am at HICKORY TRAIL. What should I do?" (This last prompt will garner a lot of suggestions from gamers, most of them unprintable in a family magazine.) The second-person prose style used in most popular computer adventures ("You are in a VAULT. You see: a BOX.") is far less cloying and accomplishes the same thing, only with a little more respect for a gamer's intelligence.

This program has some strange quirks. For one thing, the player often encounters colorful Western characters like the Dalton gang, or sleazy showgirls, but the computer won't let you talk to them! I even tried hitting the Daltons with my gun butt, only to be told that there was no response. Another suspension of logic is at the gambling table: You can cheat at cards and subsequently win, but you can't take the chips off the table.

The one thoughtful touch is an action arcade section (activated by obtaining a quarter and dropping it into the machine), but even this sequence is dragged down by the substandard quality of the games.

The worst shame is that *Bounty Hunter* holds out the promise of a *real* adventure to software-starved Adamites, then delivers a cheap knockoff of a time-worn Scott Adams adventure. Coleco Adam owners may still be a captive audience, but game publishers should stop taking this to mean that Adamites will rush out to buy *anything*, no matter how bad.

(Tracie Forman)

THINK TANK

MARKET MOGUL

Datamost/IBM-PC/Disk

If you've ever had a yen to play the stock market, but haven't because all your money is tied up in computers and software, now's your chance. The text-only program presents gamers with a list of 10 stocks and four commodities, along with such helpful information as current stock price, most recent price change (+10 or -7 or whatever), number of shares you own, dollar value, and margin.

The stocks represent major commercial areas, including OilCo, SteelCo, CableCo, PowerCo, and CompuCo. The commodities are Wheat, Coffee, Beef and Gold. Players start with $25,000 in cash and try to increase their net worth to over $250,000. The ultimate object: to get elected Chairman of the Board of Megacorp — the giant conglomerate that owns all 10 of the companies involved.

To achieve this, the microcomputer mogul has to get elected president of each company, which is easier said than done. To do this, the player must own 1,000 share of stock in the company and have a total net worth of more than $100,000 for three successive market updates.

There are many useful options in **Market Mogul.** The gamer can use a color monitor, but can change it to monochrome for easier reading. There's a beep-beep-beep sound track (which can be turned off) that accompanies each market update. These updates start with a press of the "G" key (for "Go"), which is done after you've finished all your analyzing, buying, and selling.

The "T" (for Trend) key calls up a bar-chart display of any of the companies or commodities showing the last 20 market prices. It's very helpful in planning investment strategies.

World and local events announced on the tickertape banner at the bottom of the screen can effect certain stock and commodity prices. Watch prices soar or tumble with such bulletins as: "ChemCo DEVELOPS INEXPENSIVE CURE FOR THE COMMON COLD; CompuCo NEW MICROPROCESSOR CHIP BECOMES STANDARD OF THE INDUSTRY; CONSUMER GROUP RATES NEW CarCo MODELS AS 'POOR TO HORRIBLE'; BEEF CHOSEN AS THE OFFICIAL MEAT OF THE 1984 OLYMPICS."

Other game elements include buying stock on margin (borrowing money), getting a salary and dividends, margin calls (pay up or else!), and going broke.

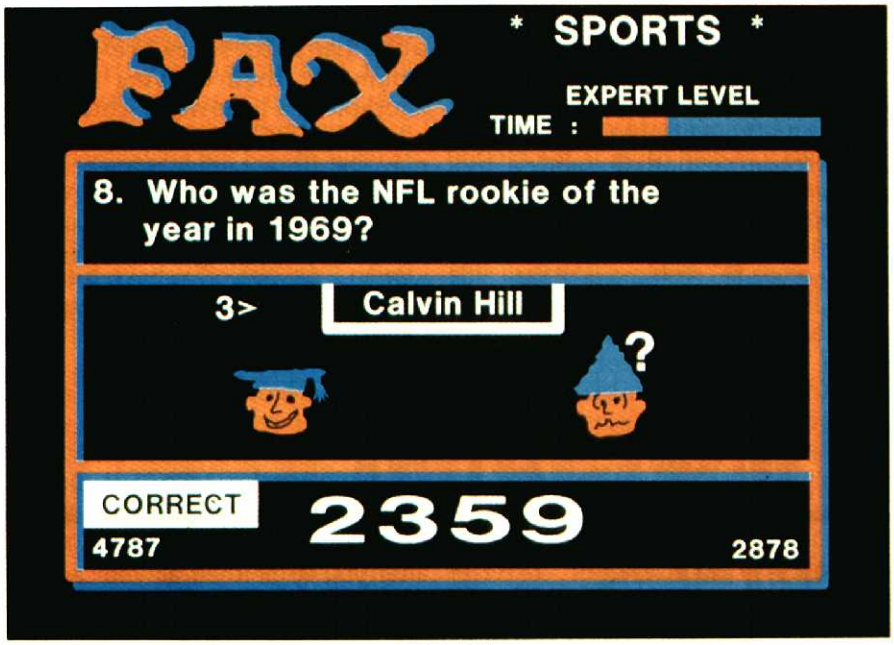
Thankfully, up to five unfinished games can be saved to continue later, since a typical session can last a couple of hours. Be forewarned: *Market Mogul* is sure to hook you once you get started.

(Walter Salm)

FAX

Epyx/Apple II/48K Disk

Here is your big chance! You've just been asked the question. Jack Barry is counting down the seconds. Your family is in the studio audience. Your friends are watching on television. You better have your **Fax** straight.



FAX (EPYX)

You panic. The answer is wrong. You blew it. The audience groans. Friends at home switch back to 'Happy Days.' You've never felt so alone.

Never fear. Just reboot the game and get the second chance you knew you deserved all along.

That game show excitement is just a flick of the switch away now that Epyx has brought Exidy's arcade challenge *Fax* into the home computer market. With three levels of competition in four categories and over 3,700 questions, the fun never stops and hardly ever repeats itself.

The gamer chooses from the novice, expert or genius classifications and then selects the category, either Grab Bag — where anything goes — Entertainment, History or Sports.

The contestant answers questions with the keyboard control. If just one player is competing against time and the highest score, the multiple choice answers will be selected by using the number keys 1-4. If a second player competes against the first, the keys 6-9 are used.

The screen display acknowledges the category of the competition; shows the time remaining for the game in a bar graph; gives each player's score and has a numerical time clock which regresses rapidly after each question is presented.

When the player answers a question correctly, the reward is the point value left on the clock. If the player's answer is wrong, he gets nothing except for an animated head wandering across the screen with a dunce cap tipped precariously on its noggin.

There are bonus point levels to strive for in both the one- or two-player modes. When that point total is reached before the game clock expires, bonus time is added to the game clock. In the two-player mode, when time runs out the winner is displayed before the option to play again is presented.

Because of the random question selection, it might seem at times that the queries repeat too often, but there will be many games in which all questions will be totally new and unfamiliar.

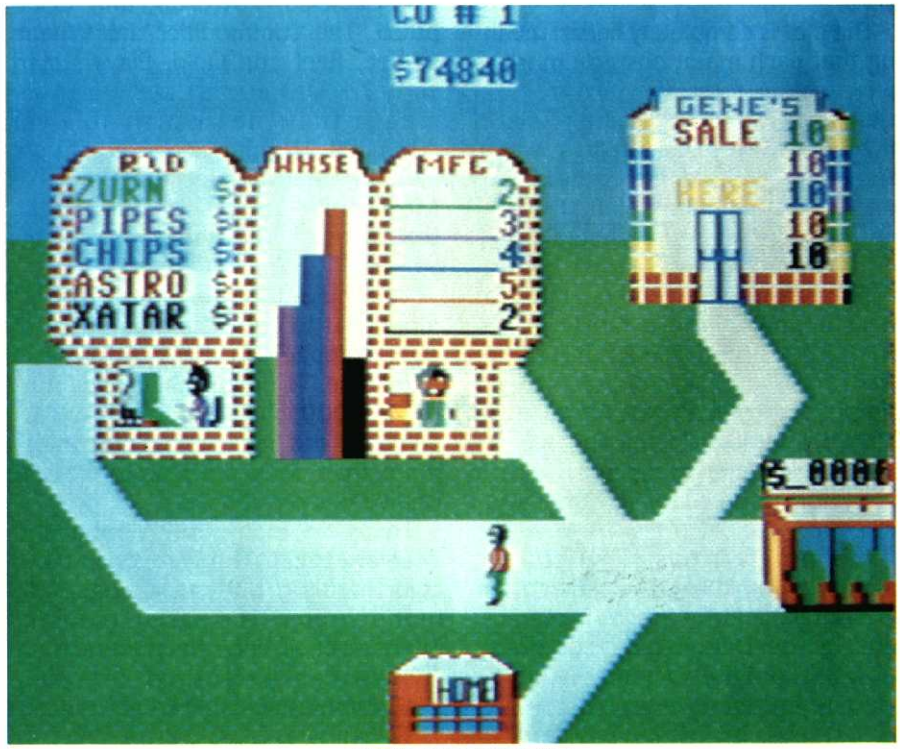
(Rick Teverbaugh)

IN THE CHIPS

Designed by Gene Genoar
Creative Software/VIC-20/Cartridge

In the Chip$ revolves around the operation of computer software business. Players decide which of two companies they will administer. (If there's only one player, the computer heads up the other.) Running the company involves developing up to five products (Zurn, Chips, Xatar, Pipes and Astro), deciding on production quotas for each, setting their retail prices, and planning advertising levels. Game options include game length (up to 20 quarters) and whether or not monopolies are allowed. The winner is determined to be the player with the most amount of cash after liquidation at game end.

At the start of each game, players are given $100,000 to invest. Since the



IN THE CHIPS (CREATIVE)

development of each product costs $5000, gamers who choose to develop every product have only $75,000 for production and advertising costs. Production runs $10 per unit and advertising is determined in units of a thousand. At the end of each quarter, the program displays a "Net Worth" statement, showing the company's financial position in terms of cash, inventory, sales, costs, total profit, and net profit for the last quarter.

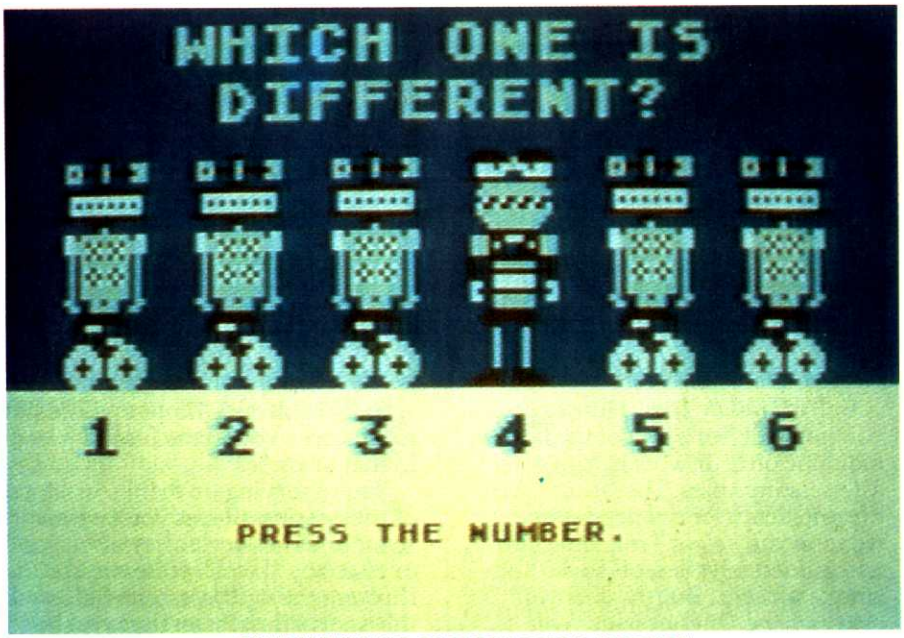
Although the play-mechanics are easy enough for a child to master (the player has only to walk the president of his company into the various "buildings" and input the appropriate commands via the joystick button), the actual strategy of how many products to develop and manufacture takes a bit of judgement. Any gamer who uses all of his cash to produce as many products as possible may find himself filing under Chapter 11 (bankruptcy) at the end of the game. A better strategy would be to produce a modest amount of goods and reproduce more if the market calls for it. After all, it doesn't make sense to overstock in Zurns and Astros only to find that the consumers are buying Xatars.

Advertising is another area that needs forethought. Although it is necessary to encourage sales, the consumers don't care who does the advertising. Therefore, when playing against the computer, let the computer use all of its cash for advertising. When playing with humans, it's necessary to reach some sort of agreement. It must be remembered, though, that the second player is in a position to renege on any agreements. If neither player advertises, sales go down, and the winner will end up being the one with the least amount of inventory.

In The Chip$* has some drawbacks, but they seem to be memory-related, due to programming or design limitations. For example, the solitaire version would be better if the computer didn't automatically advertise. For that matter, sales could have been more closely related to advertising. For example, if Company 1 were doing all of the advertising, Company 2 shouldn't benefit equally as much. In spite of these minor annoyances, *In The Chip$ is a welcome addition to a new genre.

(Vincent Puglia)

PLAYING IT SMART



TONK IN THE LAND OF BUDDY-BOTS (MINDSCAPE)

TONK IN THE LAND OF BUDDY-BOTS

Designed by Angelsoft
Mindscape/Atari/48K Disk

Young computerists (ages 4-8) get help in concentration, memory and visual discrimination, playing games scaled to their level of expertise. By guiding a friendly on-screen hero, Tonk, around the Land of Buddy-Bots, tots learn critical thinking through entertaining diversions designed just for the younger set.

There are six games, plus an adventure that combines elements from all six, each of which can be played in four skill levels. Games include "Different /Alike" (a simple matching game); "Match the Shadow"; "Minibot Shuffle" (an adaptation of the old shell game); "Remember Me" (reassemble a disjointed Buddy-Bot after having seen him intact for a few moments); "Buddy-Bot Puzzle" (assemble a creature from scattered parts while looking at his twin on screen); and "Minibot Factory (put together odd-looking creatures from mix-and-match parts).

The adventure casts the gamer as the rescuer of a Buddy-Bot whose parts are scattered through the land. Using joystick or keyboard, the computerist pilots Tonk around the kingdom, hunting for pieces. At the easiest setting, there is no opposition, and all the junior sleuth has to do is locate three parts. At the most difficult level, the Buddy-Bot is in 12 pieces, and there's a variety of problems to overcome. Gork, the meanie who's responsible for scattering the parts, and his soldiers, will try to capture Tonk; Black Holes transport Tonk straight to Gork's castle, and Sky Holes transport him back to his home.

The graphics are colorful and simple to please children. The Buddy-Bots are mini-robots made up of colorful wheels, circuits, and amusing geometric shapes. Tonk is a lovable mechanoid who lives in a tree-house, then travels to Buddy-Bot land in his personal flying saucer.

Young gamers will need parental help to read the on-screen instructions. Using the adventure portion of the program also requires assistance, since the Buddy-Bots land occupies over 50 screens and young

OUR ARCADE GAMES WE BROUGHT

Bally Midway's Spy Hunter puts you in the driver's seat of the hottest machine on four wheels. You're after enemy spies. The situation is life and death. You'll need every weapon you've got – machine guns, and guided missiles, oil slicks and smoke screens. But the enemy is everywhere. On the road, in the water, even in the air. So you'll have to be more than fast to stay alive in Spy Hunter. You'll need brains and guts, too.

Do you have what it takes?

Bally Midway's Tapper would like to welcome you to the fastest game in the universe.

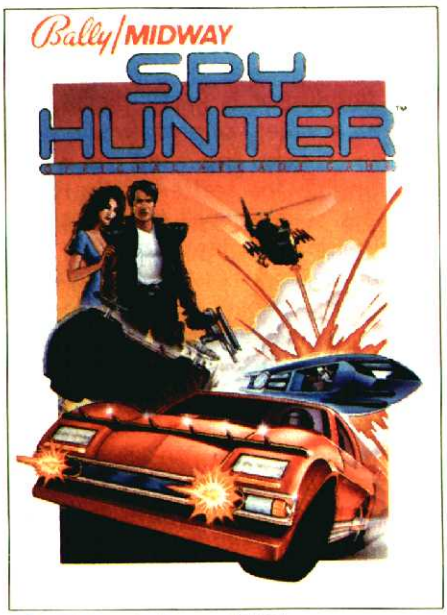
You're serving up drinks in some of the craziest places you've ever seen. And the service better be good, or else. You'll work your way through the wild Western Saloon to the Sports Bar. From there to the slam dancing Punk Bar and on into the Space Bar full of customers who are, literally, out of this world.

Are you fast enough to play Tapper? If you have to ask, you probably already know the answer.

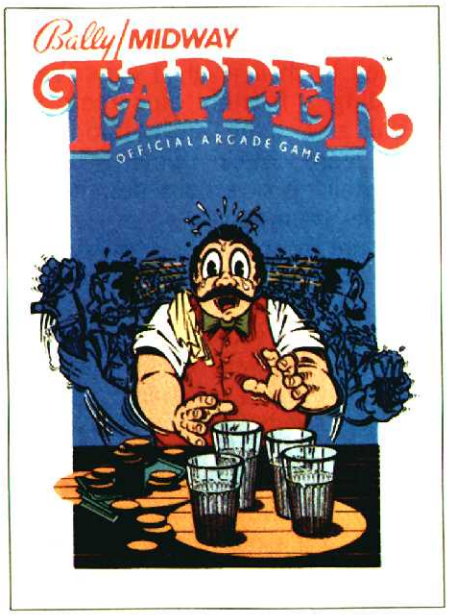
Bally Midway's Up 'N Down by Sega. In this game, a crash is no accident.

In fact, it's the whole object of the game. You'll race your baja bug over some of the worst roads south of any border. Leap dead ends, gaping canyons and oncoming traffic in a single bound. And if anyone gets in your way, crush 'em.

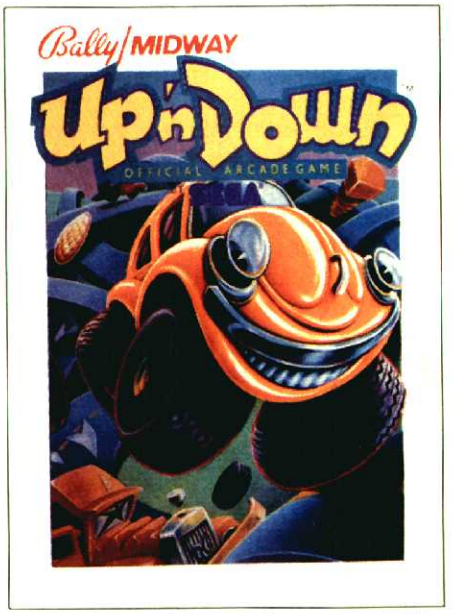
Crashing, bashing Up 'N Down. It's one smash hit that really is a smash.



The #1 Arcade Game of 1984.



Nominated as Most Innovative Coin-Op Game of 1984 by *Electronic Games* magazine.



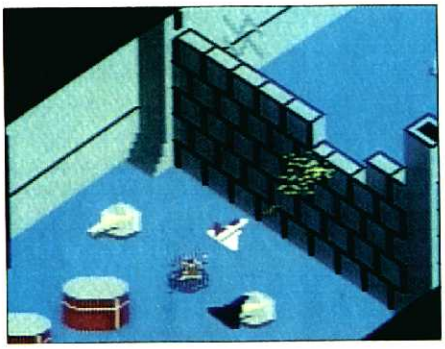
#1 Arcade Hit, *Play Meter* Conversions Poll, 8/1/84.

WERE SUCH BIG HITS, THEM HOME.

Sega's Congo Bongo rocked the home game world when it shot up to Number 3 on the Billboard chart this spring.

And now it's available for even more home systems. So check the chart and get ready for jungle action. You'll pursue the mighty ape Congo up Monkey Mountain and across the Mighty River. Do battle with dangerous jungle creatures. Ride hippos, dodge charging rhinos and try to avoid becoming a snack for a man-eating fish.

Congo Bongo. It's fast and it's fun. But be careful. It's a jungle in there.

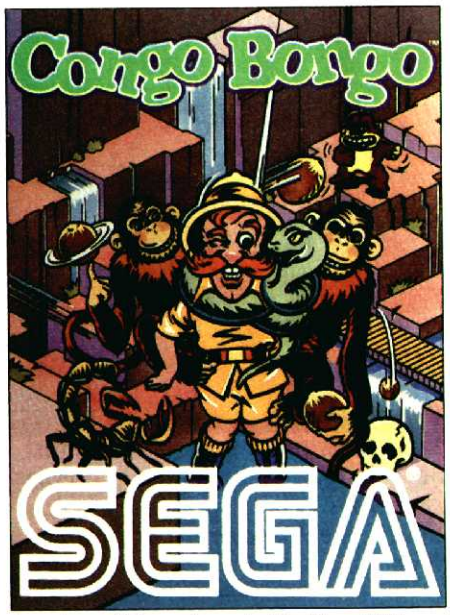


Sega's Zaxxon. If you haven't played Zaxxon, you must have been living on another planet for the past few years.

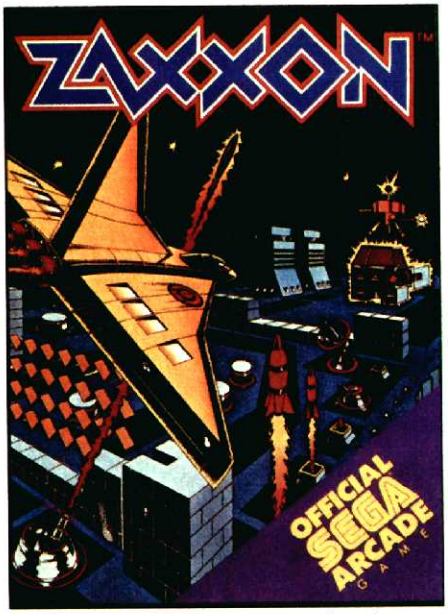
And now the ultimate space combat game is available for even more home systems. You'll pilot a space fighter through force fields and enemy fire on your way to do battle with the mighty Zaxxon robot. Countless others have gone before you in this Hall of Fame game. But this time your life is in your own hands.

Zaxxon killed them in the arcades. But compared to what it will do to you at home, that was child's play.

	SPY HUNTER	TAPPER	UP 'N DOWN	CONGO BONGO	ZAXXON
Atari 2600 cartridge	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓	✓
Atari 5200 cartridge				✓	✓ NEW
Atari Computers* cartridge	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓	✓ NEW
Atari Computers† diskette	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓ NEW		✓
ColecoVision & ADAM cartridge	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓
Commodore 64 cartridge	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓	✓ NEW
Commodore 64 diskette	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓
Apple II, IIe, IIc diskette	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓ NEW	✓
IBM PC diskette	✓ NEW	✓ ** NEW	✓ NEW	✓ ** NEW	✓ ** NEW



Arcade and Home Smash. Hit #3 on *Billboard* magazine's Top Video Games survey.



One of only ten games ever to make *Electronic Games'* Hall of Fame.

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✓ Published by Synapse Software Corporation under license from Sega Enterprises, Inc.
*Atari 400, 800, 600XL, 800XL and 1200XL. (Congo Bongo cartridge: 400, 800 and 800XL.)
†Atari 800, 600XL, 800XL and 1200XL.
**Also available for IBM PCjr.

All new games are scheduled to be in your stores for Christmas. Check your local dealer.

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gamers will need instructions to understand the map of the country.

This is a very "soft" educational game. Rather than teaching some specific subject, like arithemetic or the alphabet, it helps children gain confidence in their own abilities, as they become adept at recognizing and identifying shapes and colors, develop better memory, and acquire concentration and critical skills.

(Joyce Worley)

U.S. ADVENTURE

Designed By Jerry White
First Star Software/C-64/Disk

Here's a way for students of all ages to get some high-tech help with geography and history lessons. Easy enough for grade school students at its simplest setting, the program provides scoring challenges in the high school and tournament levels, to make it a good test of knowledge for every American history buff.

Travel starts in 1787 from Dover, Delaware, the first state. The gamer moves around the country, visiting states in the order of their admittance to the Union. Upon entering the new state, gamers choose events that happened there, then travel along a time tunnel to pinpoint the exact date of each event. The gamer gains points for successfully traveling to each state in the order of its admittance, and for identifying the year of the historical event(s) listed for that state.

To travel through the nation, the gamer first reviews the map, which highlights the current position, then uses a compass to choose the direction of the next destination. Each time any state is entered, its capital city and the year it was admitted are shown on screen; entering the correct state reveals the capital city, name of state, nickname of state, and year it was admitted, then opens the listing of historical events for view by the traveler.

The time tunnel shows the year onscreen, and joystick or keyboard controls movement backward or forward in time. When the traveler stops the time trip, the events selected from states' inventories of historical happenings are automatically matched against that date, and the computerist sees if the event is further in the past, or in the future. When the exact date is pinpointed, the score advances.

Good strategy can make the play more enjoyable. Each year's time travel costs points, so it's best to pick up as many events as possible before starting the trip, so that one sweep through the years may net scores for several incidents. Traveling from state to state should also be kept minimal, so there's real incentive for learning the order of the states' admittances. A Help option deducts points, but tells gamers the next state in the Beginner's and High School skill levels; Tournament level players have to get by with no assistance at all.

There's a lot of educational value in the game. Players learn each state's capital, the date it was admitted to the Union, and the nickname of each state, as well as the dates of several historical events in each of the 50 states. In addition, they get a thorough coaching in the geography of the country, studying the map and traveling from point to point.

U.S. Adventure is a good history/geography tutor that's a lot of fun to play. By working through the 50 states and pinpointing historical events, gamers gain a good basic knowledge about the country—without even knowing they've been studying!

(Joyce Worley)

DINOSAUR DIG

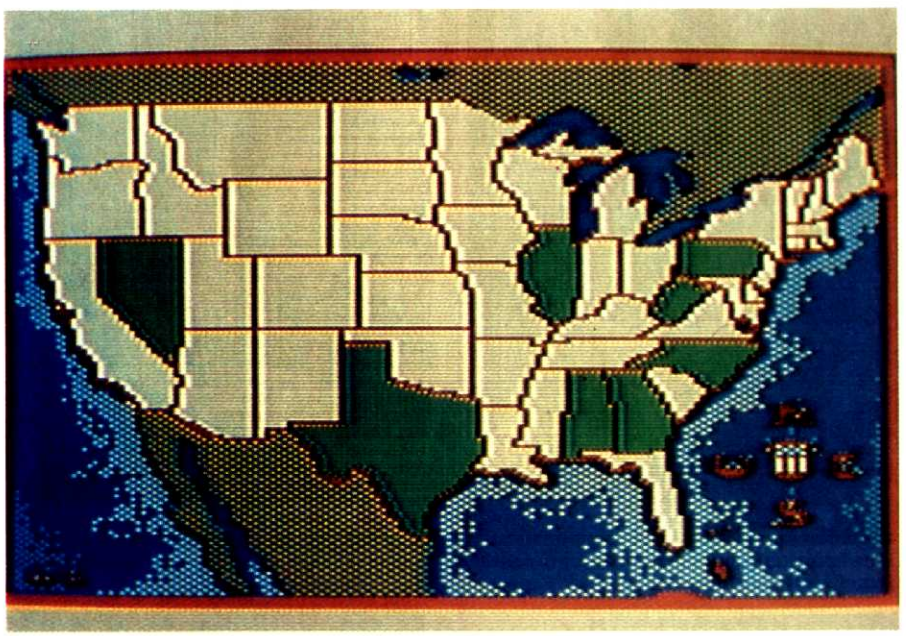
Designed by Neosoft
CBS Software/Apple/48K Disk

Ever wonder about the creatures that ruled the Earth before Man? **Dinosaur Dig** is a complete book-on-disk about the big beasts that also contains games to test the knowledge gained from its electronic pages.

Almost everyone is curious about dinosaurs, and *Dinosaur Dig* is a great way for computer owners to gain expertise about the gargantuan creatures that lived 200 million years ago.

The program comes packed with an EasyKey Keyboard Overlay that turns the console into an information bank. Each key has the name of one of the behemoths. The facts about any of the 32 dinosaurs and reptiles include name, the meaning of its name, the pronunciation of the name, its size weight, what time period it lived, where its fossils were found (displayed on a map of the world), its diet, and its scientific classification. There's also an artist's rendition of each creature, pictured the way scientists believe they looked.

Using the EasyKey Overlay, the gamer simply chooses the reptile to study. After reading about them, test the information by playing simple quiz games. "Dino Dig" presents facts about the reptiles one at a time, for the gamer to identify in up to 9 tries. "Dino Flash" is an electronic flashcard game that displays a picture of one of the creatures, then permits up to 15 guesses to identify it. "Fact or Fable" displays the names and pictures of two



U.S. ADVENTURE (FIRST STAR)

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Activision's bringing its unique kind of excitement to your home computer. We offer you the best entertainment software for the Commodore 64, Apple II, IBM PC, IBM PCjr., Atari, and Adam home computers. *Realistic simulations* like Space Shuttle: A Journey into Space.™ *Interactive fiction* like Mindshadow™ and The Tracer Sanction.™ *Creativity tools* like The Designer's Pencil.™ *Adventure classics* like Pitfall II: Lost Caverns.™ *Action hits* like H.E.R.O.™ *Sports challenges* like The Activision Decathlon. And the *strategy and action* of Ghostbusters.™

We don't make computers, but we sure make it exciting to own one.

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dinos, then asks the gamer if they lived in the same period. "Who's Biggest" displays pictures of three creatures for the computerist to choose the largest. Each game is scored according to the number of guesses it takes to identify the beasts.

To be completely truthful, the games aren't particularly outstanding, since they are very similar to school quizzes. But the program itself is excellent. If knowledge about the prehistoric age is the goal, this is an extremely pleasant way to gain it.

Although the program cautions learners that the pictures are only guesses about the actual appearance of these pre-historical critters, the graphics are nicely drawn. In addition, the text information is well organized and easy to read on screen.

Computer education via electronic books adds a dimension of action and color to learning, and *Dinosaur Dig* is a good example. Using the convenient keyboard overlay, gamers quickly explore the world of pre-history, in an easy-to-use program that's certain to please anyone who wants to know more about the giant lizards of yesteryear.

(Joyce Worley)

ENTERTAINMENTS

THE PRINT SHOP

by David Balsam & Martin Kahn
Broderbund/Apple/
48K Disk/Printer Required

Move over, Hallmark, and make room for people who care enough to design their own! **The Print Shop** turns a microprocessor into a home shop for personalized greeting cards, letterhead, even signs and banners, then prints out exactly the number of copies needed.

Using keyboard, joystick or Koala Pad, computerists choose a border and graphic design from the bank of pictures and patterns included on the disk, or even create their own. There's a lot of variety possible in the finished product, since layouts and designs can be automatically arranged or customized. Select one of eight type styles; pick solid, outline or 3-D print, and the message can be typed to suit, even varying the size of each word in the greeting, and individually placing each line of text.

After completing the face of the card, the gamer goes through the same setups for the inside, then prints the number of copies desired. The greeting comes off the printer ready to be folded, signed and sent.

There are ready-to-print cards already on disk to get users started, but the real fun is creating your own.

A printing option reproduces any hires painting created using this or any other graphics program, and another feature allows saving the art to disk.

The program comes packed with some colored paper and envelopes to get started making personalized cards. It's very easy to use, since on-screen prompts lead the computerist step-by-step through the creation process, turning every user into a designer, while providing almost unlimited versatility in the cards, signs, banners and stationery produced.

(Joyce Worley)

PIC. BUILDER

by Richard Hefter, Steve Worthington & John Magdziarz
Weekly Reader Family Software/
Atari/48K Disk

There's more than one way to make a painting on screen. **Pic. Builder** has a unique method for creating impressive graphics, even for ham-fisted operators. Most art programs let the computerist draw right on screen, and some even provide assistance in drawing geometric shapes, borders, and other simple graphic forms. Although all the paint box programs are fun for everyone, it really does take at least some artistic talent to create a painting.

Pic. Builder uses a completely different technique, so anyone can produce a handsome on-screen painting. Working from a bank of picture blocks, the computerist assembles scenes square by square, just like building a tower with a set of Lincoln Logs or Tinker Toys. There are eight separate palettes on the disk, each containing 48 picture-part blocks to combine in different ways to create varied scenes.

Each of the eight palettes contains five ready-made pictures to get computerists started. At the very simplest

THE PRINT SHOP (BRODERBUND)

LOST.

ENDLESS CAVERNS. ATTACKING BEASTS. FIND THE DIAMOND, THE GOLD. MAYBE.

Get the number one software entertainment title of the year for your *Commodore 64,™ Atari,® Apple II® and IBM® PCjr®* computer systems. Also available for major game systems.
Designed by David Crane

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level, these 40 scenes function as paint-by-number sets. The screen displays a checkerboard grid, each square containing the code letter of the block to be inserted, so even artistic illiterates can complete complex landscapes, space scenes, machinery, geometric designs, and so forth. Using either joystick or keyboard control, or a combination of both, the computerist just places matching picture blocks into the numbered squares until the painting is finished.

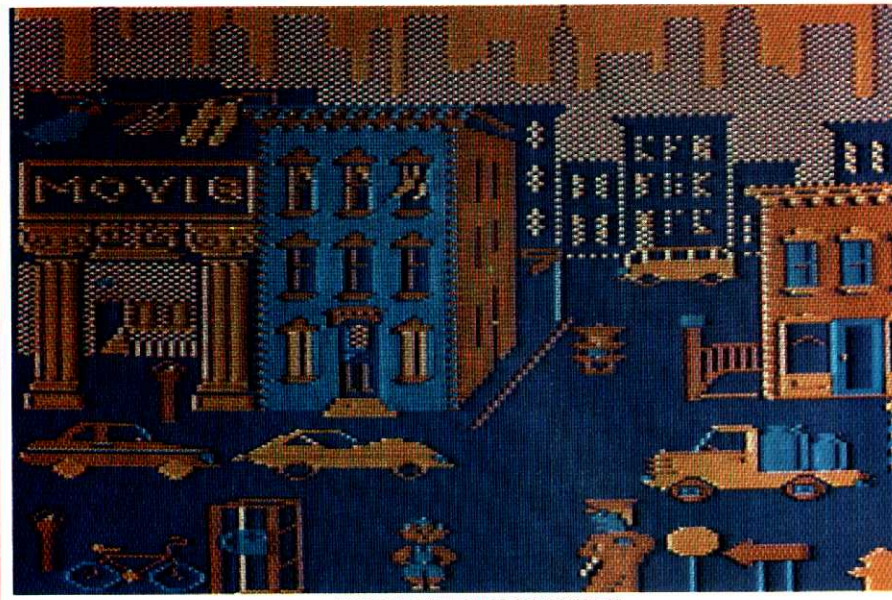
But more creative computerists can alter these pre-made pictures into different scenes, by inserting different blocks. Anyone who feels really adventurous can start with a blank screen, then create a completely unique illustration.

The documentation included with the program includes a poster with several pictures made from each of the eight palettes, reference cards showing the blocks contained on each palette, and a comprehensive manual with lots of suggestions for ways to use *Pic. Builder*.

This creative program is highly entertaining and easy to use. The palettes contained on disk have a lot of variety, so they can be recombined in different fashions to create hundreds, or even thousands, of pictures. Ambitious artist can even use graphic programs to create entire new palettes.

This is an all-age program (8 through adult) with many hours of entertainment value. Whether you're a striving Picasso or a less-talented pencil-pusher, *Pic. Builder* is a lot of fun, since anyone at all can produce a delightful illustration on screen by just pushing a few keys.

(Joyce Worley)



GRANDMA'S HOUSE (SPINNAKER)

GRANDMA'S HOUSE

by Interactive Picture Systems, Inc.
Spinnaker/Atari/48K Disk

Grandma's House is standing empty, and it's up to youthful computerists (ages 4-8) to furnish the two-story home. This high-tech dollhouse sends gamers on shopping expeditions to seven separate locations to find the things they want to give to Grandma.

The computerist chooses two people from the Character Screen. One stays with Grandma, and the other is free to travel to jungle, garden, city, park, beach, furniture store and appliance store, to pick up presents for her. The joystick moves the hero or heroine right or left away from Grandma's house, and to the new locale. Move the character next to the object desired, push the joystick button, and (if it's movable—not everything you see can be taken!) it goes along with the character back to Grandma's home, to be placed in the spot desired. Change your mind, and simply lead the object to a different spot, or even completely off the screen to make room for more things. There are many, many objects that can be taken home to furnish Grandma's house; everything from furniture to toys, animals, even bathtubs and parking meters.

Each locale has its own pleasant musical theme, and these cheerful accompaniments enhance the fun, as young housemakers fill the house with everything they like, then rearrange the furnishings to suit themselves.

The graphics leave a little to be desired. While the objects and characters are cleverly rendered and easily identifiable, clarity and sharpness of detail are lacking. Colors lack brightness, and the screen has a disappointingly "muddy" appearance.

Moving the cursor-character from one scene to another sends the program back to the disk for more information. Since the game involves more or less constant movement between locales, there is a fair amount of waiting time. However, young computerists seem less troubled by these delays than their adult counterparts.

Having so many objects, people and animals to choose from is a definite plus. *Grandma's House* can quickly be filled with beautiful furnishings, *objets d'art* and humorous and whimsical items that a child has fun identifying.

Since the program uses both sides of the disk, children will need some parental help booting the program and getting started. But once the fun begins, *Grandma's House* is highly entertaining, and easy.

(Joyce Worley)

ARTICLES OF WAR

OBJECTIVE: KURSK

Strategic Simulations/Apple II, Atari/48K Disk

While flawed in some respects, **Objective: Kursk** does impart to the player a "feel" for the type of combat strategy that went into that huge WWII operation. The German army, attacking from the north and south, attempted to encircle Soviet forces

near Kursk. Thousands of tanks, men and weapons were used in this awesome display of combative technology—and just as awesome is the attention to detail that the programmers have tried to bring to life in this game directed at the inveterate WWII gamer.

The game features every tank, man and heavy weapon used in that battle. Each one is rated for defense and attack strength. When you think about that for a moment, you can't help but be impressed just by the amount of historical accuracy and research that must have gone into the program coding.

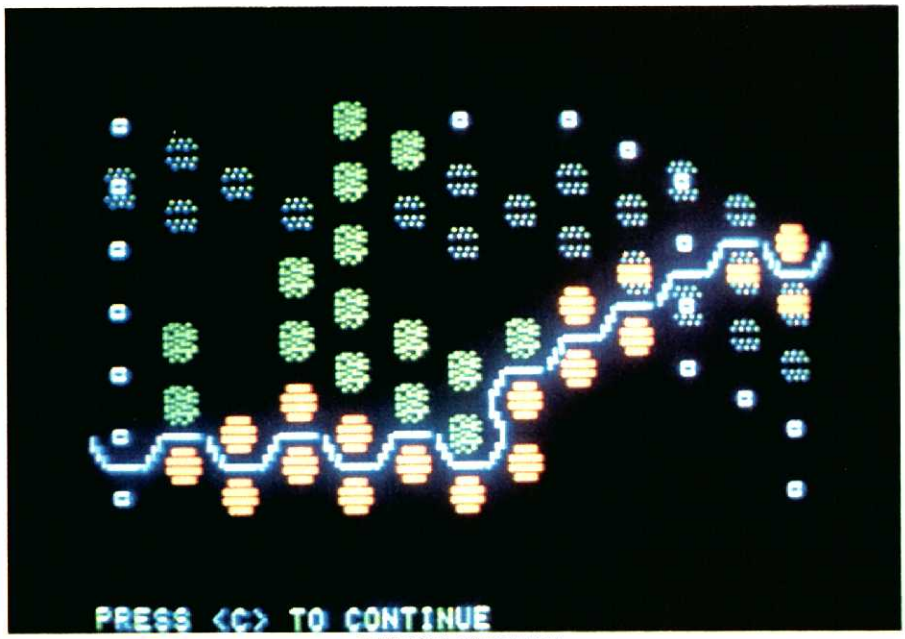
But there are some problems with *Objective: Kursk*, as a game if not as a simulation, that may not make it every wargamer's darling.

Fought as a "grand-tactical" scale game, the units are shown on the hexagonal map as military symbols, rather than silhouettes or artistic icons. The display brings to mind the war-room rather than the battlefield. And it is in a war-room atmosphere of careful deliberation and strategic manipulation that the wargamer or gamers must operate as they "play" this simulation. *Objective: Kursk* will not reward a hot-blooded style of tactical maneuver, nor anything less than an incisive strategic viewpoint.

The game is played in a series of phases. The player decides the level of difficulty of the one-scenario game (the level having to do with effectiveness of mines and when reinforcements appear). If the player will command forces against the computer, the computer opponent runs the Soviet forces.

The first phase is the Group Adjustment Phase. In this phase the player can scroll the video screen to view any 13X8 portion of the 31X32 hexagonal map. Using the number keys to direct a cursor's on-screen movement, the player may inspect and change the makeup of any combat groups.

Each group can contain from 1 to 5 combat units, and each combat unit can contain up to 6 different weapon systems. Each time the cursor is placed atop one of the symbols, the player obtains a screenful of data listing the units and weapons that go to make up that group. The on-screen abbreviations are fairly straightforward and result in minimal looking between the screen and the manual. A typical CU, or combat unit, might be called a "INF RGT" for infantry regiment or a "TANK BDE" for tank brigade. Within the CU the various weapon systems are referred to by abbreviations such as "122 INF" for 122 infantry squads, "20 50AT" for 20 75mm anti-tank guns, and "88 ENGR" for 88 engineer squads.

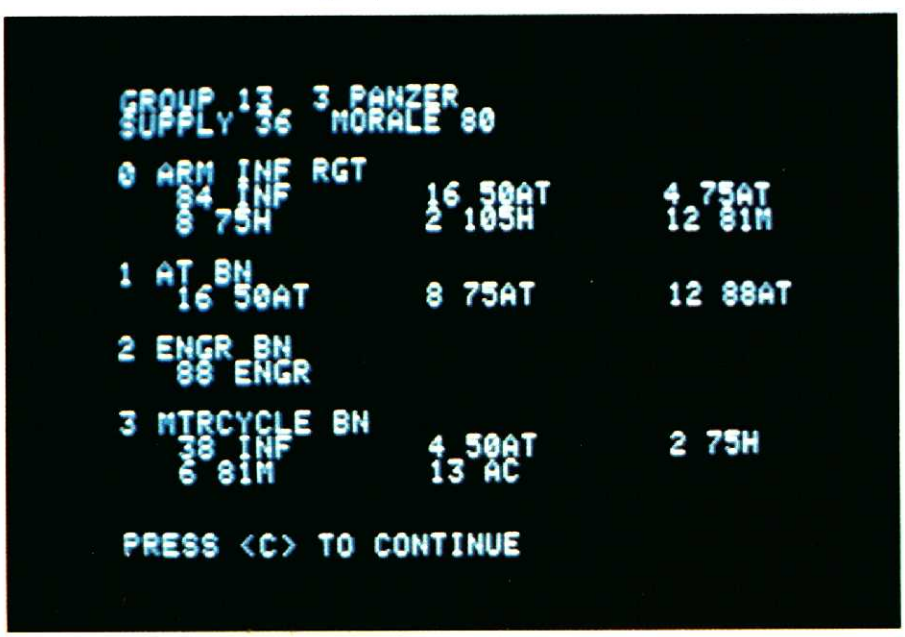


OBJECTIVE: KURSK (SSI)

The player can trade combat units between any two groups "stacked" in the same hex. Or, you can split off combat units into new groups of the same divisional identification.

The Supply Phase is next and is easy to follow and use. The supply depots enter from a map-edge road hex and are guided by keyboard command. Each time the player hits the "S" key the units that the depot can, and has, supplied vanish from the screen. In this manner there's no doubt as to whether or not you have supplied a Panzer group—if you can see it, it's hungry for supply.

The one problem with supply is a mistake in the manual. According to the manual, the German supply depot



OBJECTIVE: KURSK (SSI)

can enter from two widely separated southern road hexes. But the game will only allow the depot to come into the screen from one hex. If you get a manual which says the German depot can enter via two hexes, correct it at once.

Following the Supply Phase is the Tactical Plot and Road Movement Phase. In this phase, the player plots out movement which will take place during four sequential movement updates. Movement is again plotted against a sort of compass rose of number keys wherein number 1 is north; 2 northeast; 3 southeast; 4 south; 5 southwest; 6 northwest and 0 no move at all.

So if a CG (combat group) is plotted as 1112 then it will move north for three of its movement updates and northeast on the fourth one. Another CU might be plotted as 1116, and the clever player can choreograph the movements of his CG's so that they join when needed, don't block each other and use the terrain and other variables to the best advantage.

The amount of movement possible is dependent on what mode the CG is in. Static, assault, mobile and road modes all affect both movement and defense, as well as some offensive actions.

Bombardment, for example, is governed by the mode of the unit. Only CG's in static mode can bombard enemy CG's (and units in static mode don't have any movement points). To bombard, the player structures for each CG a bombardment plot to direct fire. A plot of B1 shows a bombardment one hex north (B for bombardment, 1 for north); while a plot of B34 would show a bombardment of two hexes away (B for bombardment, 3 for the hex being one away in a southeasterly direction and the 4 meaning one hex still further south).

As the units move and bombard, they use up their supply points. How many supply points each CG can carry is a function of that CG's morale level, but more on morale in a moment.

The Air Mission Allocation Phase is next and here players assign fighters and bombers to direct combat missions or to C.A.P. (combat air patrol). On a direct bombing run the cursor is moved atop an enemy unit and planes are assigned. Planes left over will try to

OBJECTIVE: KURSK (SSI)

intercept on C.A.P. any enemy planes on assignment. The actual aircraft are not shown on-screen.

All combat is done in the manner of attack strength divided by defense strength equals the casualties. Disruption is also figured into the combat effects. Both casualties and disruption points are cumulative from one battle to another, and a unit may be attacked by as many combat groups as can sequentially be brought to bear upon it. Disruption may finally reach a combat group's morale level, at which point the group has to retreat or be destroyed.

Keep in mind that each combat group's strength is a direct function of the weaponry carried by the combat units that go to make it up. For example, fifty PZ-II tanks have a combined attack strenth of 100 (2 points each). In this way, each of the combat groups become an individual unit with its very own strengths and weaknesses that the player-general must be aware of.

Weather also plays an important role. There is a 10% chance of rain every turn (each turn being 12 simulated hours). When it rains, movement becomes crippled, as it quadruples the supply points needed and rivers, streams and gullies all can impose disruptive effects on the combat groups.

Victory determination is based upon the control of towns and cities—control being decided by who last moved a supply depot or a CG through that area. Points are also awarded for

Keep An Eye On The Weather And Maintain Morale

every surviving weapon within every combat unit in every combat group. There are a lot of points involved. For example, a decisive Soviet victory is determined if the Soviets retain more than 120,000 victory points (A draw would result if both sides retained 60,000 to 80,000 points).

Although the manual and box claim that a complete game can be played in ten hours, it took us a total of eighteen to play the first full game, and twelve for the second. But, maybe we're just *too* careful!

Two things make this game less than it might be. The first is the manual. The manual is deficient both in historical detail and in the type of player aids one would normally associate with a game of this type. Morale, for example, is a pivotal factor in this game of disruption in combat, but there is no table listing various levels of morale to expect among your CG's. Nor is it ever explained how to figure morale yourself. While, when you move the cursor atop the unit, the morale is shown onscreen, this means that to really familiarize yourself with morale levels you have to look at every CG. As for historical detail, the entire battle is summarized in one short paragraph.

Also, there are some rough edges in the programming of this game. Leaving aside the German supply rules we've already mentioned, there is still some problem with envisioning the battlefield and movement of the onscreen viewpoint. There is no strategic map that shows you the battle as an integrated whole. You must always scroll around the board, but there are no shortcuts to help scroll. Some games divide a large board into a number of video screens so that, for example, typing a 1 will send you to the middle of the first screen. But, in this game, you must move the cursor hex by hex in a very time-wasting manner.

The other problem with the game may or may not be a problem at all, it is in your definition of the word "game." To me, the *Objective: Kursk* package is, doubtless, a fine historical simulation. But it does lack in a subjective "feel" of fluidity, control and understandable challenge that I personally look for when I feel like gaming.

(Neil Shapiro)

GAME OF THE MONTH

Danger Lurks Beneath The Pyramid

MONTEZUMA'S REVENGE

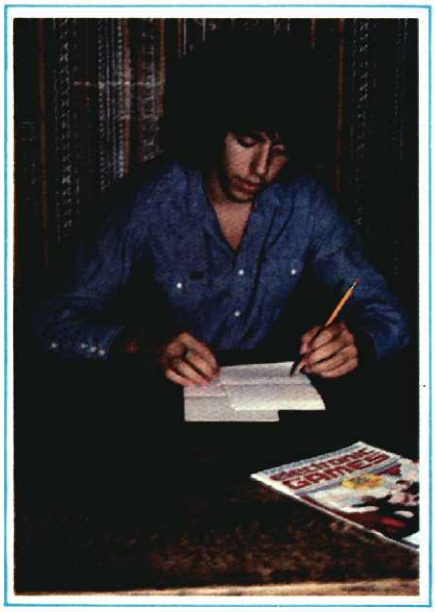
Parker Bros./Atari computers, 2600, 5200 ColecoVision/Cartridge and Disk

Montezuma's Revenge is a multi-directional, scrolling, explore-the-secret-chambers contest of a type that might seem familiar to owners computers *and* disk drives. Synapse Software is perhaps best known for exploring this intriguing genre that demands puzzle solving skills blended with hand-eye ability. Disk-based software such as **Pharoah's Tomb** and **Shamus** delighted players with seemingly endless corridors of weird chambers and deathtrap rooms.

This issue's Game of the Month is an important evolutionary step in this category of game, since it not only boasts gloriously-colored characters in settings of considerable graphic scope — everything in *Montezuma's Revenge* looks *big*; the platforms, poles, ladders and even the chains are thick and impossible to miss — but it does it cartridge as well as disk format.

That's right, now everyone who owns an Atari computer, 2600, 5200 or ColecoVision not only can have a chamber-exploration contest, but a state-of-the-art one as well.

The game is set in the underground ruins, which have a graphic style somewhere between Incan and Aztec and a little southwest of Mayan. Players maneuver a tiny surrogate through a series of complex chambers with a high level of puzzle-type contests. Vertical movement is achieved via either ladders or chains, while horizontal travel involves simply going as far as possible east or west. At some point, either a wall or a door will be encountered on your travels. Walls, as is their way, are pretty much impossible to pass. Doors, however, can be — aha! — opened. But first, the keys.



Robert Jaeger, game designer.

Keys are scattered all over the place, in little grottos or just hanging in mid-air. In addition to keys, there are other bonus objects, and the program is as scrupulous as Felix in "The Odd Couple" in insisting that we clean our computer plate — in this case, the playfield. Leave a key hanging in the treadmill chamber (level 3) and forget about picking up the sword — or anything else — in the poles-and-platform room to the right.

This game's real strong point is its startlingly soft, yet effective, graphics. The colors are all drawn in soft pastels, creating an exciting and relaxing effect. The eyes are pleased with the sherbert hues and the mind intrigued by the compelling nature of the contest. Additionally, the fat graphics make for great target, so no one can ever alibi that they "couldn't see it — it's too *smallllll*!".

The collection of characters is an amusing gallery of skittering spiders and rolling white skulls that evoke those sugar-skulls Mexican children eat on the annual "Dia de Muerte" (Day of Death). The neat thing in this game is that players are protected from double jeopardy. If your on-screen surrogate is hit and wiped out by, for example, a skull, when the next life begins, the skull is gone — you can't be killed twice by the same deathtrap. This eliminates those inevitable frustration plateaus reached by all gamers at some time or other when some object or other just cannot be breached. "Try it again next time," *Montezuma's Revenge* suggests, "for now, you've suffered enough."

On playfields with no solid flooring, the bottom of the screen is more often than not filled with a roaring, volcanic fire. Jump too far, slip at the wrong time, or fail to stop on a dime and, poof! The on-screen character literally goes up in smoke! This program is quite good, in fact, at killing off its protagonist — in the graphic sense. The explorer can fall no more than one body-length. Drop farther down than that and he lands on his head, his legs twitching in cartoon-fashion.

Montezuma's Revenge is a long way from being ground-breaking — except in the matter of its format — but it's roaring good fun, integrating everything from invisible rooms to appearing/disappearing jump-steps.

The only serious complaint is that, on level 1, there's a game-continue option that allows the contest to be picked up at the point the last game ended, but this feature isn't available on the second and third levels — and the third level is where things get *really* interesting!

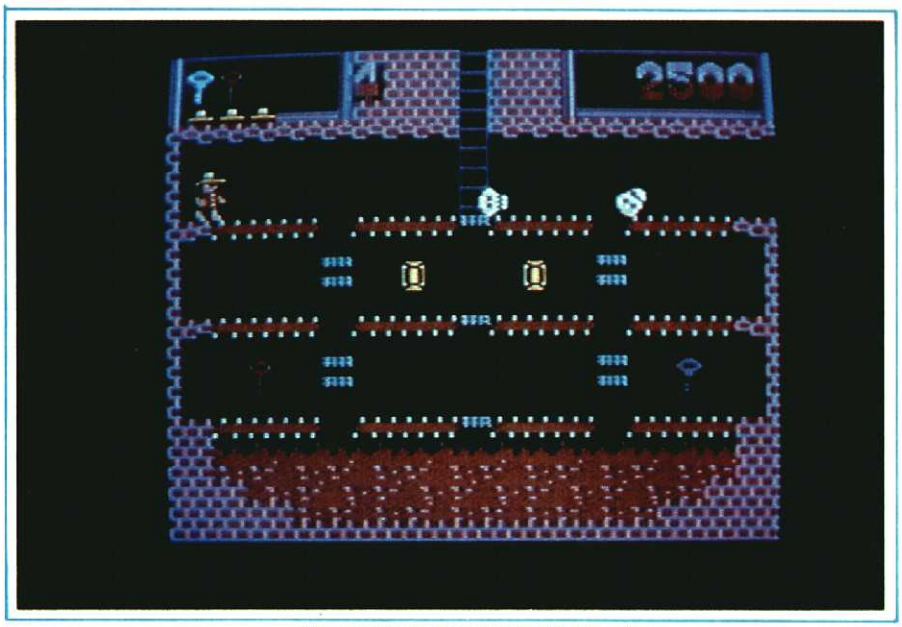
Montezuma's Revenge is the brainchild of Robert Jaeger, already a seasoned professional, despite the fact that he's only seventeen years old. Jaeger is completely self-taught in the computer arts, having cut his teeth programming BASIC on his Bally Astrocade videogame system. "When everyone else was into playing pinball, I was into videogames," he recalls. "That was when I knew I was going to design games for a living." He was eleven years old at the time.

After trading in his BASIC cartridge for Z80 assembly language, Robert invested in an Atari computer. "I was working quite a bit, even at twelve years old, on my Bally, putting in long hours. My school grades reflected that I just didn't have time for school."

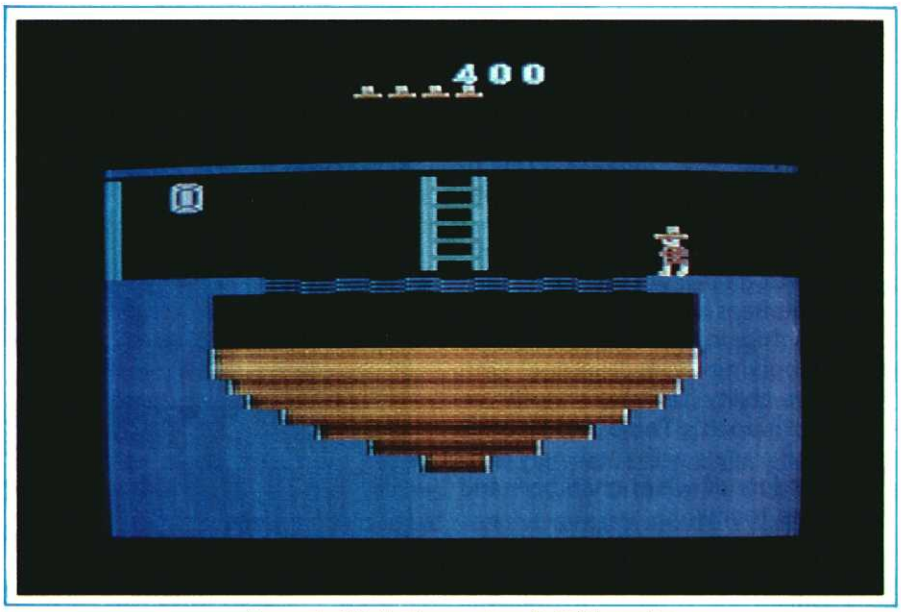
He dropped out of high school at age 16, completing his degree at night school. Although his father has always been supportive of his career (he travels with Robert and serves as a consultant on business matters), "Parents don't like to see their kid drop out of high school. But," he adds, "I didn't leave school until I had some solid job offers — none of which I took."

What he did instead was form his own software design group, Utopia Software. He was only 14 when he sold his first game to a local computer company, though he doesn't like to talk about the program. Utopia went on to design the **Kick-Man**-like **Pinhead**. Not long after, Robert and his father were displaying Utopia's wares at a tiny booth at a Consumer Electronics Show when one of their unfinished titles attracted interest from several Parker Brothers executives. The game was ultimately to become Parker's *Montezuma's Revenge*.

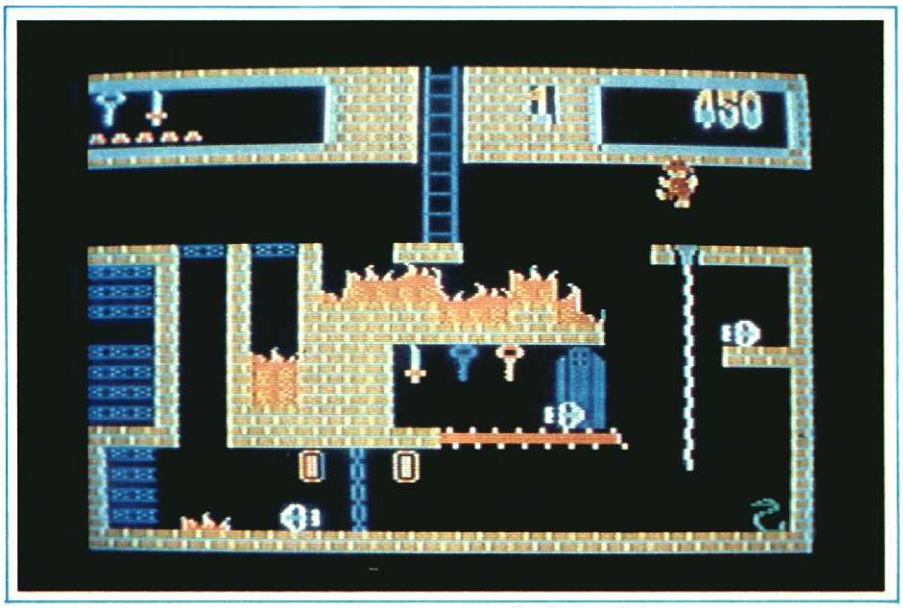
"The main idea in *Montezuma's Revenge* was to combine the adventure genre with arcade action," he says. The original conception had to be scaled down a little to fit on cartridge format, and Robert credits Parker



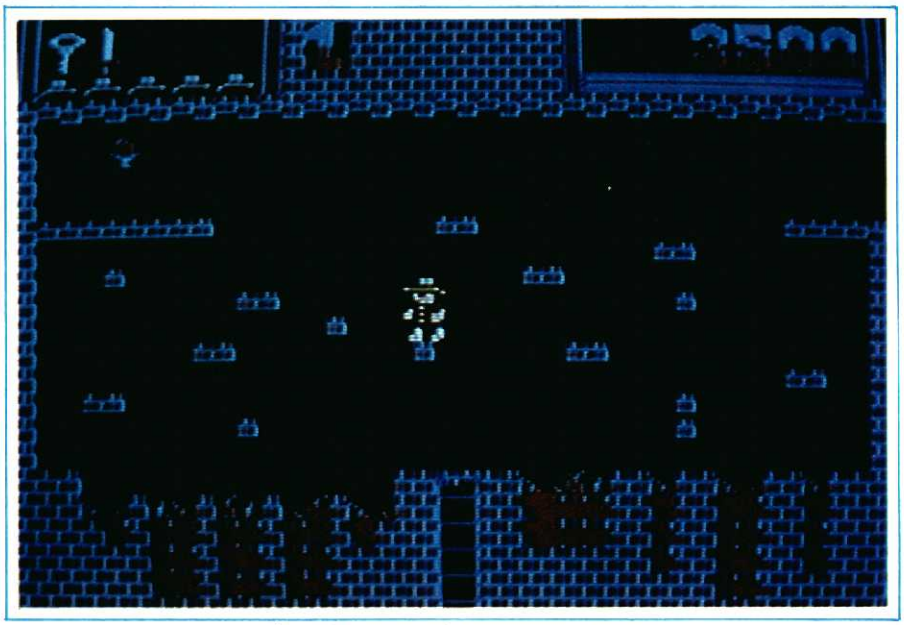
Montezuma's Revenge **for the C-64.**



Now what?? Atari computers & 5200 version.



Montezuma's Revenge **on the ColecoVision.**



The VCS version of *Montezuma's Revenge*.

Brothers with doing a good job of condensing it.

Now Jaeger is putting the finishing touches on his latest work. Though he's characteristically closed-mouthed about the new game's subject matter, he feels it's destined to be "the last of the great arcade action games."

When the project is finished, Robert plans to take a vacation, his first in the years since he started programming with the kind of professional intensity usually seen only in older, more mature designers. When Robert takes his vacation, though, it probably won't be lying on a beach sipping a Pina Colada. After all, consummate professional Robert Jaeger is still too young to drink!

STRATEGY: WATCH THEM ROLLING BONES!

The tricks involved in staying alive in this particular Temple of Doom are pretty much standard to the genre. Overall, however, begin by clearing off the first screen, then sweep to the left, avoiding the truly intimidating rooms without so much as a backwards glance. Then begin working your way back east, in the direction of the stairstep chamber.

The most important game elements are the keys. You can't get far without plenty of keys, so don't miss a one, and if you do, don't be surprised if you can't pick up a bonus object or another key later in the game.

ColecoVision version

Remember how you went. Map progress as you go — or figure out a way of keeping tabs on where you are.

Appearing/disappearing objects abound in this game. Chain walls kill upon contact, but they disappear with clocklike regularity. Likewise, the jump-blocks are dangerous but highly predictable. After a disappearance, wait for them to fade back in, then jump — or double-jump, as the situation demands. But know where you're going before you get there and make the moves with machine-like precision. Hesitant players end up on their head, legs twitching in the air.

Remember the double-jeopardy rule. If all else fails, eliminate an object by giving up a life to it, rather than getting hung up and losing your all-important sense of timing.

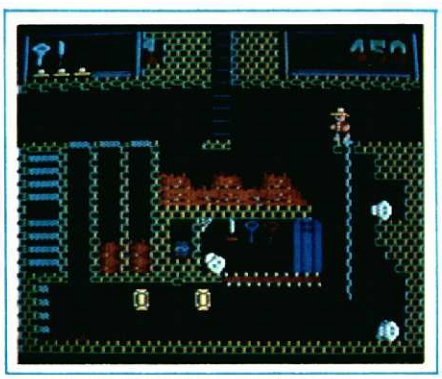
The real killers are the invisible rooms. When you can't see what you're walking on, it's hard to know when you've gone too far. Here, only experience will give players anything resembling a sense of where things are.

Sometimes, bonus objects are found hanging between a pair of climbing chains. To pick these up, simply jump from one chain to the next, passing across the object in question.

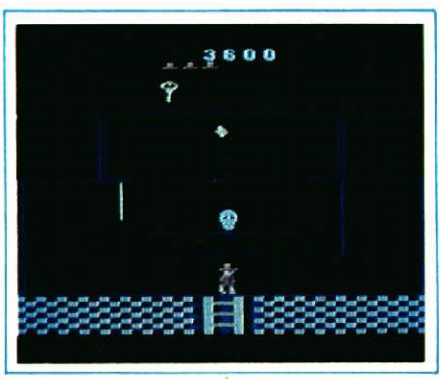
Too much strategy spoils the game, and most of what players will find here they will be able to work out through common sense, practice and more practice.

Keep alert, move fast, know when to jump and. . .don't drink the water.

As with most games of this genre, the best way to win is to keep alert and to sharpen up those reflexes. Practice timing your jumps until you almost never miss—and remember that speed is of the essence! One more important tip: Don't drink the water. G



Some like it hot—C-64 version.



Going after the key on the VCS version.

Montezuma's Revenge for Atari computers.

Quick.

How many plates can the Juggler juggle?

Chinese Juggler

That depends on you. You are the Juggler and your act is the delicate art of plate spinning. Yours will be a tough act to follow if you succeed in matching colors and spinning plates on all 8 poles at the same time.

As your skill increases, so does the pace and the challenge of the game. You must act with speed and precision or the curtain will come down and your act will be all washed up!

Chinese Juggler is a refreshing departure from the usual shoot-em-ups and strategy games. It's fun, fast-paced and will delight players of any age. For Commodore 64. New from Creative Software.

$24.95

How do you moonwalk, snake and tut?

Break Street

You'll soon become a break dancing expert with our latest bestseller, Break Street. Now that combination of gymnastics, mime, funk, and just plain show-off, leaves the sidewalks and comes home to your Commodore 64.

Individual play guides you through the footwork of moonwalk, backspin, windmill, tut, and the rest of those sidewalk moves. Slow motion and lively musical accompaniment help you perform each move step by step. String together a whole series of moves and record them for future replay.

Catch the beat of the street with Break Street. For individual or team play. New from Creative Software.

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The answers are at your finger tips.

What's the capital of Alaska?

Roll Call USA

Do you know? Get ready to outwit your family and friends with Roll Call USA's fun facts on states,capitals and major industries.

Roll Call USA combines history and geography facts into a colorful question and answer game that challenges your knowledge of the 50 states, their capitals, major industries and statehood dates.

Feel confident? Drill yourself with a Flash Test. The game is speeded up, so think fast. Your answers are tallied up at the end for a final score.

Roll Call USA, a game of USA trivia for team or individual play. For Commodore 64. New from Creative Software.

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Call and order today! Use your Visa, MasterCard or personal check. Toll Free **1-800-331-7990** (outside California), **1-800-448-1001** (in California), or **1-408-745-1655.** MONEY BACK GUARANTEE. If not completely satisfied, return within 10 days for full refund.

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PLAYERS GUIDE TO

MICRO-COMPUTERS

THE MICROCOMPUTERS COMETH!

A NEW ERA DAWNS

Things change fast in the computer universe. As recently as two years ago, the idea of having a microcomputer in the home seemed pretty remote to most people. Now as many American families own a microcomputer as had a programmable videogame console back in January 1983, the peak of the cartridge system boom. By the end of this holiday season, 16%-20% of all U.S. homes will have a microcomputer, thanks to the hardware sales which are expected to top 6.5 million for 1984.

If the general public is dipping into the computer ocean, then the nation's gamers are cannonballing into the same waters. A recent independent study of subscribers to *Electronic Games* shows that almost 55% have already purchased home computers. The survey was completed during the summer, so the anticipated strong fourth-quarter sales should greatly increase this percentage by the end of the year. Interestingly, more EG readers buy computer software, about 60%, than own computers at the present time. According to follow-up interviews, the fact that some prospective computer owners are already buying software for use on friends' machines accounts for the apparent discrepancy.

COMPUTER GAMES TAKE OVER

Why are people buying so many computers? Ralph Baer, the father of the videogame, asserts that there are only three legitimate reasons for buying a computer: word processing, linkage to a network through a modem, and entertainment. That's an extreme view, admittedly, but though other experts might subdivide any of Baer's broad categories, it's hard to knock down the basic tenet that games are one of the main reasons computers are finding a place in the home.

Sales figures don't lie. More than one out of every two pieces of software sold in the U.S. is a game. And because game-lovers buy programs more often than other computerists, leisureware is likely to maintain its dominance for a long time to come.

THE COMPUTER GAME DIFFERENCE

Many have remarked on the basic similiarity between programmable videogames and computers. While the overlap in technology is certainly no illusion, some crucial differences between the two have emerged.

It may be that player expectations, rather than technology, are most responsible for this. Gamers know that computers have more memory than videogames can utilize bulk storage such as a disk drive, and permit more varied player input, so they expect computer software to reflect these advantages.

And, by and large, they do. Computer games downplay real-time joystick-triggered action in favor of simulations which require more thoughtful—and complex—responses, often employing the computer keyboard.

THE GAME EXPLOSION

Before the arrival of the microchip, adult gamers were like gold prospectors. It often took a lot of searching to find even a single desirable nugget.

Pure economics, rather than the stinginess of the manufacturers, kept new releases down to a low level. Although conventional boardgames had—and still have—a large following, the audience for computer games may be as much as ten times larger. Why? Conventional boardgames frequently require lengthy sessions of rules-reading, followed by a long set-up period before the action can begin. And once a conventional boardgame gets going, there is sometimes enough bookkeeping to justify hiring an accountant to keep matters straight.

Even the most difficult computer games are much easier to learn and play than the non-electronic variety. This has gained a mass audience. That mass audience, in turn, has encouraged software publishers to bring out hundreds of new titles each year.

Today's computerist can choose from more than 1,000

game programs. The great number of titles promotes diversity of theme, as each publisher tries to target a specific audience in the gaming community with each new release.

SOFTWARE COMPATIBILITY

Some day, particularly if Japanese proponents of MSX get their way, it will be possible to run any piece of software on any brand of microcomputer, but that "someday" still lies in the future.

Compatibility is nonexistent. A few companies make "workalikes" for the Apple or IBM PC, but disks generally won't run unless they're configured for the specific system in question.

Multiple editions are the stopgap method to make most software available for most computers. Some companies are putting versions for two systems back-to-back on a single disk, thus saving retailers one stock-keeping unit. That doesn't alter the fact that you need an Apple to play a game designed to run on an Apple. Fortunately, virtually all major game titles are eventually published for the major computer systems.

MEET THE MAJOR MICROCOMPUTERS FOR GAMERS

A CONSUMER UPDATE ON TODAY'S LEADING BRANDS

Buying a home computer shouldn't be an impulse purchase. A little comparison shopping can mean the difference between getting the right machine and ending up with a system that doesn't satisfy.

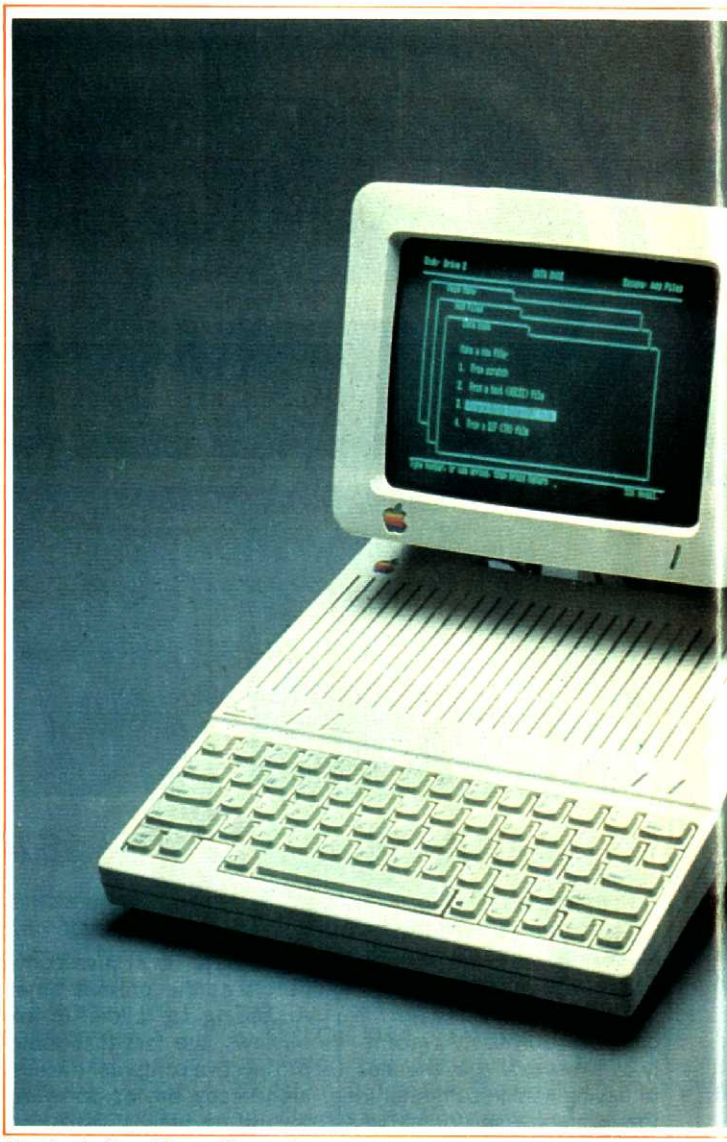
The next couple of pages spotlight the leading brands of microcomputers. We can't tell you which one to buy—needs vary too much from person to person—but we can present some of the basic information you'll need to make an intelligent decision.

Warning: The computer field is changing rapidly. Prices and even features may be changed or modified by the time this issue of *Electronic Games* reaches readers. Check your local computer retailer for any last-minute changes.

APPLE: A HARDY PERENNIAL

The introduction of the first Apple opened the way for today's vast home computer market. The northern California manufacturer periodically updates and improves its systems while retaining compatibility with its earlier units.

As far as gamers are concerned, the important model at the present time is the Apple IIc, which was introduced earlier this year. This revolutionary transportable packs 128K of memory power into a package weighing in at a feathery 7-1/2 lbs., including its built-in disk drive.



The Apple IIc with monitor and mouse.

The Apple IIc works with a regular television set or monitor. A video display styled to harmonize with the console costs a little under $200. Apple expects to introduce a "flat screen" monitor some time within the next year.

Because computers compatible with the IIc have been on the market for almost five years, the software library supporting this micro is second to none, especially in the area of leisure programs. The unit's four-channel sound is an improvement over the II+, but the graphics remain less impressive than those of the Atari or C-64.

ATARI 800XL: THE PATH OF A LEGEND

As the Apple II+ was the machine of choice for the first wave of computer game designers, the Atari 800 became a favorite of the next generation of code-bashers, which dominated the 1983-1984 period. The so-called insiders were skeptical when Atari rolled out its XL line, and their cynical attitude wasn't helped by the fact that the first machine unveiled to the public was the ill-fated 1200XL, a technological mishmash that never entered national distribution.

The 800XL has overcome this unfortunate beginning to take its place as one of the most respected home microcomputers. Its sleekly-styled black-and-gray cabinet

includes 64K of memory and BASIC as a resident language. While its freshly-restyled disk drives (prices begin at about $300) don't hold as much data as comparable Apple drives, they're quite reliable and reasonably quick-loading. A top-mounted cartridge slot accepts a wide range of cartridges, most containing 16K of memory.

The 800XL sports excellent graphic resolution with the greatest range of colors, 256, found in the home market. Four-'voice', high-quality sound is routed through the TV set speaker, or an extra external speaker is available.

The software library, on both cart and disk, is extensive. Atari has published dozens of titles, emphasizing translations of popular coin-ops, and third-party support has been tremendous.

Jack Tremiel's take-over of Atari leaves many questions hanging in the air, especially about whether Atari's next computer—and you can bet there'll be one before too long—will be compatible with existing machines. Also unsettled at presstime is how much software support Atari plans for the XL during the end of 1984 and the first six months of next year. Third-party software publishers are understandably worried, which could slow down introductions of new programs for the 800XL. As of this writing, virtually all new games and entertainments still come out in Atari-compatible versions.

The only sure thing about the 800XL's future is that its price will drop. A good starting set-up was already comfortably under $1,000, but Tremiel-watchers expect Atari to aggressively cut prices to challenge field-leading Commodore.

The rub, of course, is that the future of the 800XL is unclear. No one can say right now whether third-party software support will continue at a decent level, or even if the company will still be producing 800XL's in 1985.

COMMODORE 64: A STAR IS BORN

When Commodore introduced this successor to the VIC-20 18 months ago, some critics were quick to seize upon its flaws. The problems, including a long load-time

The Atari 800XL with disk and cassette drives and printer.

The ill-fated Atari 1200XL.

The Commodore 64 computer.

and a cranky disk drive, haven't disappeared, but the passage of time has allowed the system's enormous strengths to emerge. Obviously, millions of Americans have decided they can stand the drawbacks to get the benefits, since the C-64 is currently the nation's fastest-selling home computer.

One reason is that buyers get a lot for a little with the C-64. This 64K machine has a full-stroke keyboard, rear slot for cartridges, superb sound, and graphics that are about mid-way between the Apple and the Atari in quality, color, and resolution. The price is under $160 for a console, and its major peripherals were designed to be easy on the pocketbook, too. It must be noted, however, that some owners are still complaining about the quality of the disk drive and its failure rate. Fortunately, Commodore is fairly good about repair and replacement of defective merchandise.

Third-party software support for the C-64 has been building throughout the year. At this point, most publishers produce C-64 editions of virtually all titles, and it's far from unusual for a new game to make its debut on this machine. Commodore's own software effort has improved tremendously. A wasteland a year ago, Commodore's C-64 software library now includes some solid winners like **International Soccer** and **Jack Attack**.

CAN IBM SAVE IT?

Speaking of the PCjr, IBM is upgrading it in a number of respects. How fast these changes will be implemented and how far they will go toward rehabilitating the system is still very much up in the air.

For a list price of slightly under $1,000, consumers should be able to buy a 128K PCjr with built-in disk drive. Peripherals under the IBM brand are somewhat upscale, but compatible economy models are available.

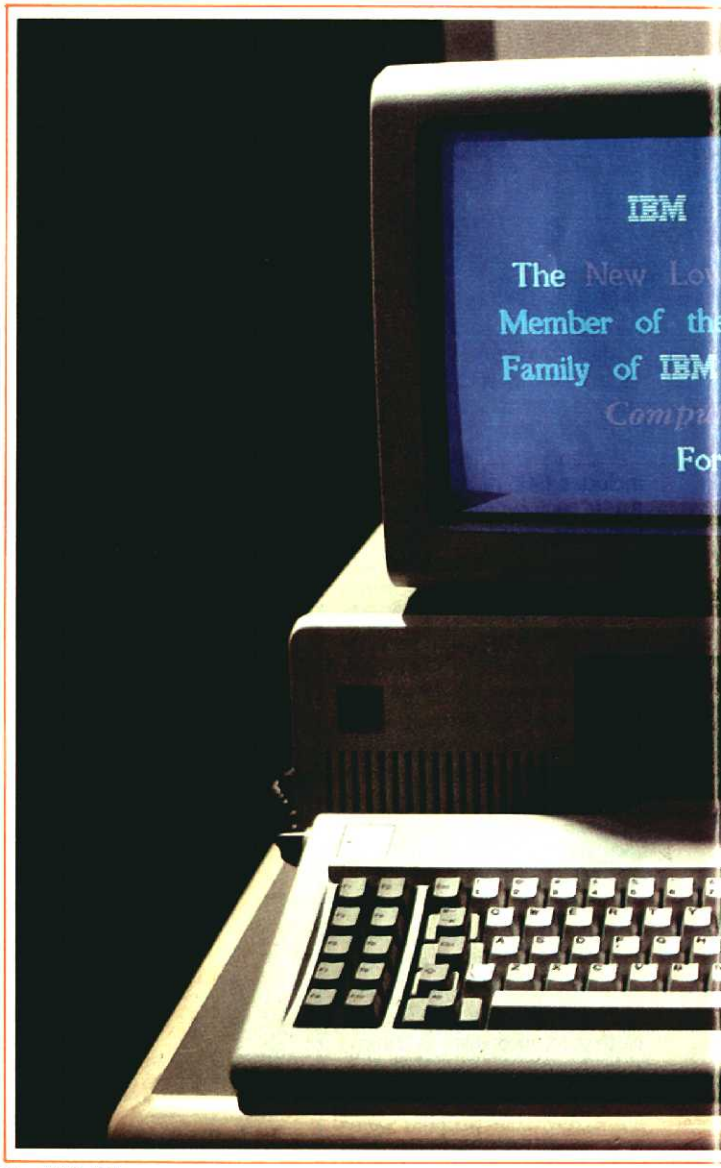
Although IBM has stressed non-recreational uses for the PCjr, the system is not entirely bereft of software support. IBM has marketed a few games bought from other design houses, and third-party support is firming up. Because of its large memory, the IBM is attracting the notice of designers who feel cramped by a limitation to 48 or 64K.

THE BIG BUNDLE

Coleco's master stroke in marketing its under-$1000 computer was the way the company tied a complete set of components together in a single low-priced package. But the toe-stubber was that Coleco didn't sufficiently refine its technology before showing the Adam to the public, saddling it with such dubious technology as its data storage drive.

The Adam has taken more criticism—both fair and unjust—than any other home computer. Newspaper and magazine stories often compared Adam to systems costing five times as much, arriving at the inevitable conclusion that it just didn't measure up.

Actually, the Adam holds its own pretty well in the hardware arena. The system has approximately 80K of memory, expandable with future add-ons, and comes with a



The IBM PCjr.

PLAYERS GUIDE TO MICRO-COMPUTERS

data storage drive, letter-quality printer and some resident software like basic and word processing programs. the printer's electrical connection is cumbersome, requiring the whole system to shut down if this one periperhal gets into trouble, but its speed and noise level is comparable to Atari's printers for the XL. Color and graphics resolution are good.

The software picture is less encouraging. Coleco has limited production of games to a few souped-up translations of titles already available for its ColecoVision videogame, and the company has no plans to step up the pace. Third-party publishers, noting the Adam's rocky start, have dragged their feet about producing games for it. This situation should automatically improve, however, if Coleco successfully demonstrates its announced intention to heavily support the Adam. An auxiliary Digital Data Drive and a disk drive are now available.

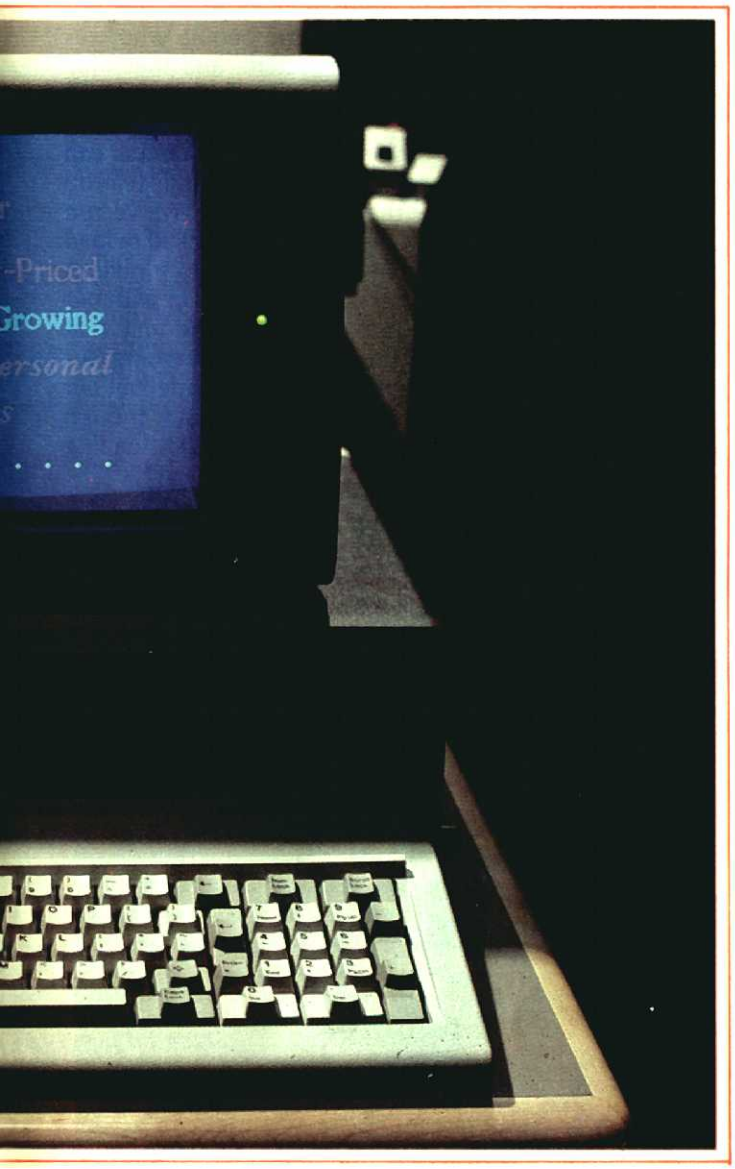
SHOPPING FOR THE RIGHT HOME COMPUTER

HOW MUCH COMPUTER DO YOU NEED?

Talk about electronic wonderlands! Computer stores and departments are jammed to the ceiling with an incredible array of hardware systems and accessories.

Obviously, someone wants this gear. What should be equally obvious is that no one needs all of it. The idea is to buy the hardware you need, not just to empty your wallet.

How much equipment does a gamer need? If you can afford it, EG recommends starting with a console, disk drive and monitor. This provides CPU, a mass storage device for running the most popular game format (disk) and a high-quality method of displaying the results.



A couple of investments worth considering are a computer station and some storage cases. A station—or "desk" as the non-computing world calls it—eliminates having to set up the machine from scratch for each play session. It's easier to use a keyboard at normal typing level than hunching over it on the living room floor. Disk and cartridge holders protect the games and may prevent your house or apartment from drowing in a sea of unsorted software. A good joystick is an action-gamer's best friend, as well.

Further purchases become increasingly optional—and more and more dependent on what non-gaming uses you have in mind for your micro. A printer is at least marginally useful for adventurers who like to retain a script of their performance, and greatly enhances many art and animation titles. Whether to buy an expensive or cheap one, however, probably depends on how much word processing and database work is in the cards for the future. A modem connects an individual micro to one or more networks. For the gamer, this can provide news about the hobby, contact with potential opponents, and a host of non-gaming services.

PICKING THE RIGHT MICRO

What do gamers need from a computer? Memory size, graphics resolution, audio quality, and the size of the supporting software library are the most important basic considerations. Other factors worth scrutiny include the availability of peripherals, the number of colors viewable on the display, expandability, and the manufacturer's warranty and customer-service policies. This information is easy to find. It's mostly a matter of sifting claims and counter-claims and comparing listed specifications.

Hands-on experience is the best way to answer more subjective questions about a potential computer purchase. The only way to know if you like the feel of the keyboard, or to find out if the system fits your personal definition of "user friendly", is to try it.

No computer is perfect. Potential buyers must balance each machine's qualities.

WILL MY COMPUTER BECOME OBSOLETE?

Yes, it will. Technological progress insures that all present-day computers will be greatly surpassed by newer models by the late 1980's.

What counts is how much use you're going to get out of the system. If you're like most people, you'll eventually become dazzled by the miracles possible with some new micro and replace whatever you buy today. But if you choose the right home computer now, you'll have gotten your money's worth by then. Who wants to be one of those people who are still waiting for manufacturers to market the perfect color TV set so they can watch the Super Bowl instead of listening to it on the radio?

TEST LAB

By HENRY B. COHEN

Evaluating Atari-Compatible Disk Drives

In the last year several companies introduced sleek, low profile (dare we say 'sexy'?) disk drives for Atari computer systems. Rana, Concorde, Trac and Indus were just some of the manufacturers to join the ranks of Atari and Percom.

Disk drive manufacturers are really just the packagers of products. The drive mechanism itself comes from one source, the power supply (most often) from another. The cabinet may or may not be custom-designed, but the disk controller circuitry is the one unique claim of the brand name. Therefore when we discuss disk drives, we mean the entire package as you would buy it. When we talk about the drive mechanism we are referencing the products of Tandon, Shugart, MPI, TEC, etc. We point this out because the specific drives we evaluate may not be the same drives you see on store shelves, even though they carry the same make and model number as those described in an article.

As long as a drive mechanism can fit into a cabinet and meet specifications, it is interchangeable. EG may test a Percom with an MPI drive installed, while our readers might buy the same unit containing a Tandon or Shugart. This is why pictures some companies use to advertise don't always exactly match what you see in the stores.

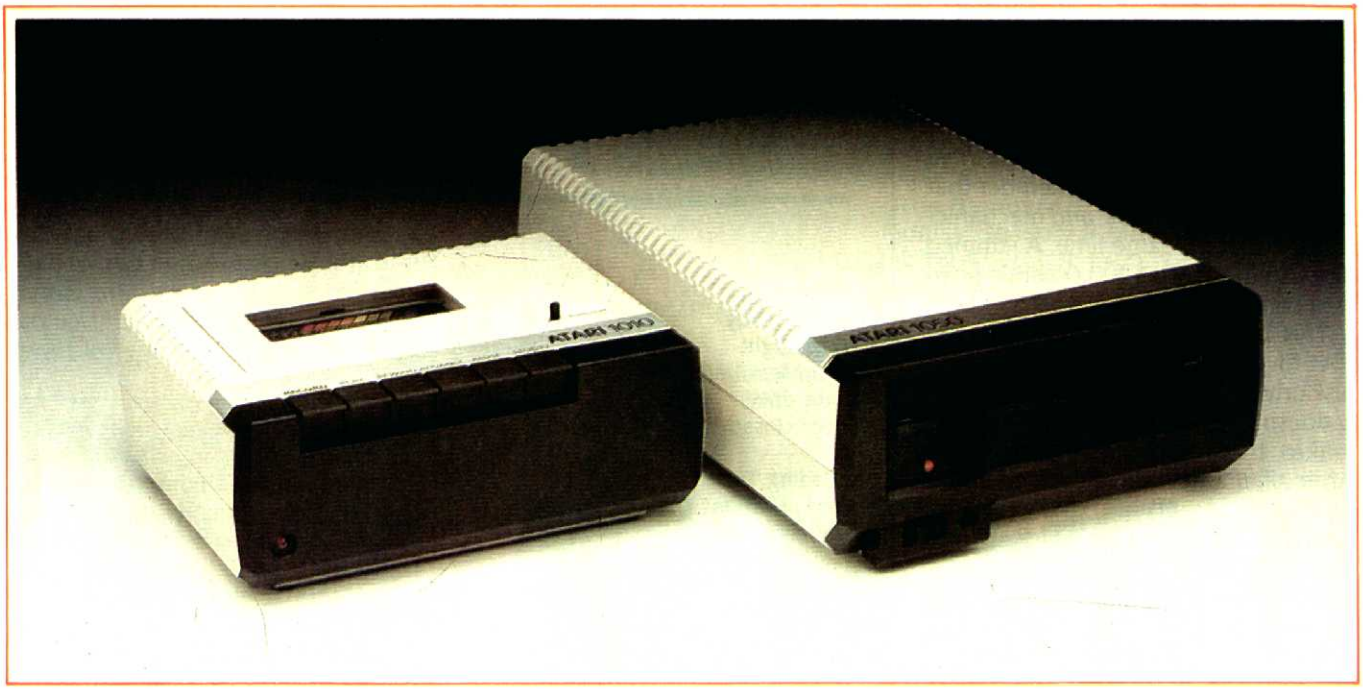
There are few areas where a drive manufacturer can cut costs. Once the controller board is designed and manufactured, the drive itself is the only major variable for increasing profits. When a new drive is introduced, the manufacturer has committed to several thousand drive mechanisms, but after that it's open house and the lowest bidder usually wins. It's true that a cheaper power supply may be found, or shorter cables supplied — This *is* a highly competitive business. Some manufacturers have even looked into eliminating the DOS (Disk Operating System) that comes with their products, though none have actually done it as of this writing. The only way to ensure 100% program loading capability is to buy a drive from the manufacturer of your computer system. Only Apple will guarantee that its drives load all Apple programs, and the same is true of Atari, Commodore, IBM etc. for their respective computers.

The reason for this is that computer manufacturers copyright as many aspects of their operating systems as possible. Competitors are forced either to license—which is costly and not always possible — or to emulate the system from scratch. The problems are that 1) you can't duplicate a system with 100% accuracy at a reasonable price, 2) not all programs are written following the original manufacturer's guidelines and 3) companies keep changing their systems. And some programmers take advantage of "tricks" that work with the original equipment but don't work with the aftermarket goods.

Atari seems to have outsmarted itself when it made the XL equipment incompatible with the earlier 400/800 series. All Atari drives will work interchangeably, but the software won't. That's the reason for the Translator disk.

Rana states that its drive was designed by the same people who created the Atari system, and that they have successfully loaded over 5000 programs with it. We don't question the truth of that claim, but neither can we corroborate it. We can only tell you that of the 100 programs we've run through the unit not one failed to load properly — we also had no problems with either of our Percoms or with our Atari 1050. The Concorde unit that was sent to us is still undergoing improvements so, while it loaded all our programs, the jury is still out, though Concorde also claims a 100% loading

The Rana 1000: elegant, feature-laden and few problems.



The Atari 1050 disk drive and 1010 recorder.

capability. Neither Indus nor Trac responded to our calls for evaluation models.

Each of the four disk drives we tested has design differences. Percom enjoys two distinctions. The company has overcome a bad initial image and now produces top-flight units. Its difficulties can be traced to the first drives it marketed several years ago, but unfortunately they still carry a tainted image among many Atari owners and some dealers. Whatever Percom's original problems, its new equipment performed flawlessly. Our favorite drive is a Percom RFD 44-S2 double side-double density behemoth. The equipment isn't pretty or refined, but it *is* built solid and reliable, almost like a tank. All the frills are inside, including the beefy power supply. In fact, Percom is the only manufacturer we can think of that does not use an outboard supply. The Percom drive ranks number one with us in speed, storage capability and brute strength. The company's drives are usually bit more expensive than the competition, but for the heavy-duty user, these are the units of choice. For the light gamer there may be better values to be found (not everyone wants to drive a tank).

At the other design extreme is the Rana 1000. This is an elegant, feature-laden drive that has a few minor problems, all of which should have been resolved by the time we go to press. The original Rana 1000 suffered from a slight engineering oversight. According to the company there was insufficient shielding on the motor, which caused the unit to magnetize itself after approximately 18 hours of service. Since the company's testing period lasted only 6 hours, this problem was not caught before many of the drives were shipped to dealers. Rana uses an MPI half-height drive, not our favorite, with a spring-loaded disk-holding mechanism with a door that must be pulled down and forward to open, or pushed in and upward to close. Many people (including this editor) had trouble with the door until the correct procedure was discovered. The company was made aware of the problem, and an addenda should now be packaged with all current units. As far as the spring-loaded ejection device goes, some are more gentle than others. Ours can fling a disk six feet across a room if we're not careful. The motor problem has been solved, but consumers who own a Rana and suffer inconsistent or peculiar loading problems can have the motor replaced free of charge — even if the unit is out of warranty.

Moreover, Rana's claim to having successfully loaded 5000 programs is a strong one, unmatched by any other company we've contacted. Rana's newer units also include a 6502 microprocessor — the same chip used in all Atari computers—to ensure perfect loading of all programs. We like Rana drives, especially for gamers, because the displays are fun to watch as a program loads, the units are relatively small, and once the door problem was resolved, our sample loaded all programs perfectly. Also, the low price (under $250.00 in N.Y.) makes it a very attractive buy. We're still not convinced, however, that Rana 1000s will stand up to the punishment a full-sized Percom unit can endure.

The Atari 1050 is an interesting machine, clearly designed for ease of service and appearance. Its one overwhelmingly intelligent feature is a front-mounted on/off switch, a feature it shares with Concorde. Four screws must be removed to open its cabinet, and even the worst klutz can have the drive or the controller board in hand in less than a minute. Since most drive repairs involve an exchange of some major component, this is a significant plus for people without access to a competent repair facility. (See sidebar for our tale of woe.) The 1050 will load all Atari programs, continues the slightly oversized tradition of its predecessor, and stores less data than its competitors. Atari uses a high-density mode which is not the equal of double density. There are better choices for home programmers, especially among Percom products. For gamers, it's a coin toss between Rana and Atari.

Concorde is the new kid in town, and given its one year over-the-counter exchange program, its disk drive should be a sure-fire success. If a Concorde drive fails for any reason simply trot back to the dealer and get another, with no questions asked.

This feature is more important than

you might think at first, since disk drive failures are notorious. Remember that they're both electronic *and* mechanical devices at the same time. A jammed disk can destroy a $200.00 drive head in seconds.

This brings up another point. The cost of computer repairs is high, and disk drives are costly to fix. It frequently doesn't pay to service a drive, which makes them somewhat disposable. After all, if a new drive costs $250.00 and a necessary repair goes for $200.00, why have it repaired at all? Concorde's one year exchange program looks mighty good when put in perspective.

Physically, Concorde's unit is a cross between the Atari 1050 and almost any Percom. It's encased in a heavy steel shell, giving it the weight and heft of a Percom, but it is low-profiled, sleek and has a front mounted on/off switch like an Atari. It is certainly the unit of choice for those who contemplate repairs (like the parents of younger users) but hasn't been around long enough for a complete evaluation.

As we went to press we learned that Concorde has filed for Chapter 11. This might affect the availability of its disk drives; however, stores which have been carrying the drives will probably still have stock for some time.

DRIVE COMPARISON AT A GLANCE

	ATARI 1050	CONCORDE 221M	PERCOM RFD 44-S2	RANA 1000
Time from off to ready (busy light off) Measured with drive door closed	9 Sec	9 Sec	3 Sec	9 Sec
Loading Time for Solo Flight (48K version)	73 Sec	70 Sec	72 Sec	70 Sec
Storage Capability		176K	704K	176K

NOTE: All measurements were taken three times and averaged. The results were rounded. Each drive took approximately the same time to load the test program. The Percom unit finished first because its busy light went off six seconds sooner. This is an important consideration for programmers or those who boot a great many programs. The time savings can be considerable.

When we began this investigation, we didn't expect to find a clear winner among the many offerings. What is remarkable is that so many units work so well, even with such differences in design philosophies.

To sum up: for the gamer on a budget or the gadgeteer, there is Rana; the "serious" computerists should examine a Percom; and for those who contemplate problems there is Concorde. The Atari unit has overall high quality and systems compatibility, and it will certainly load all Atari programs. And while it's almost instantly serviceable, it's more expensive and larger than a Rana 1000. All these drives are worthy. Each has a unique personality and represents good value, depending on usage and user requirements.

Each aftermarket manufacturer is constantly trying to improve its product. Percom is already including a printer port in its most recent models, and Rana and Concorde have theirs in

Concorde's disk drive has a one-year, over-the-counter exchange guarantee.

the works. This is a valuable addition to a drive, and we feel it's worth waiting for. If you expect to daisy-chain several drives, make sure that the system you select has the proper ports to do so and that the drives can be designated (or configured) by hardware. All drives should have some form of switch for this purpose. Again, this is of minimal concern to a gamer but may become important if your system or interest level grows.

WE'VE GOT TROUBLE

About six months ago our twin drive Percom sprung a door hinge. We had been using the unit, which then housed two full-sized MPI drives, without a hint of trouble. Time passed and we noticed that some often-used disks began to resemble LP records. Finally it was time for a fix. A call to Percom indicated that it was best to first try their only metro New York City authorized repair service — Midtown Audio. Midtown Audio was no longer in midtown — they moved uptown but not far enough.

Taking the unit in hand, in we went only to discover that Midtown required a $40.00 fee for estimating the cost of the repair. To expedite matters we signed a $250.00 authorization and left the premises in a state of shock. Having given the firm two weeks to respond, during which time they failed to call back, we began to phone them. We finally told them to repair the unit post haste or prepare to return it to us.

Precisely three weeks from the day we delivered it, nothing had been done. A "technician" had checked the machine (this after our fourth angry call) and determined it needed a new head. They could not, however, estimate a charge.

We took our unit back, lost our $40.00, and sent it off to Percom. It was repaired and returned within three days. The final cost was almost $300.00 not counting Midtown Audio.

Percom is currently evaluating its service situation and is thinking of bringing it in-house. We agree and relayed our tale of woe to their service manager. This was not the first complaint they received about this firm — it won't be the last.

There are two points to be made, 1) that servicing an expensive drive is expensive, and 2) that it's probably best to return it to the factory. Obviously not all service centers are poorly managed or incompetent, but why take the chance?

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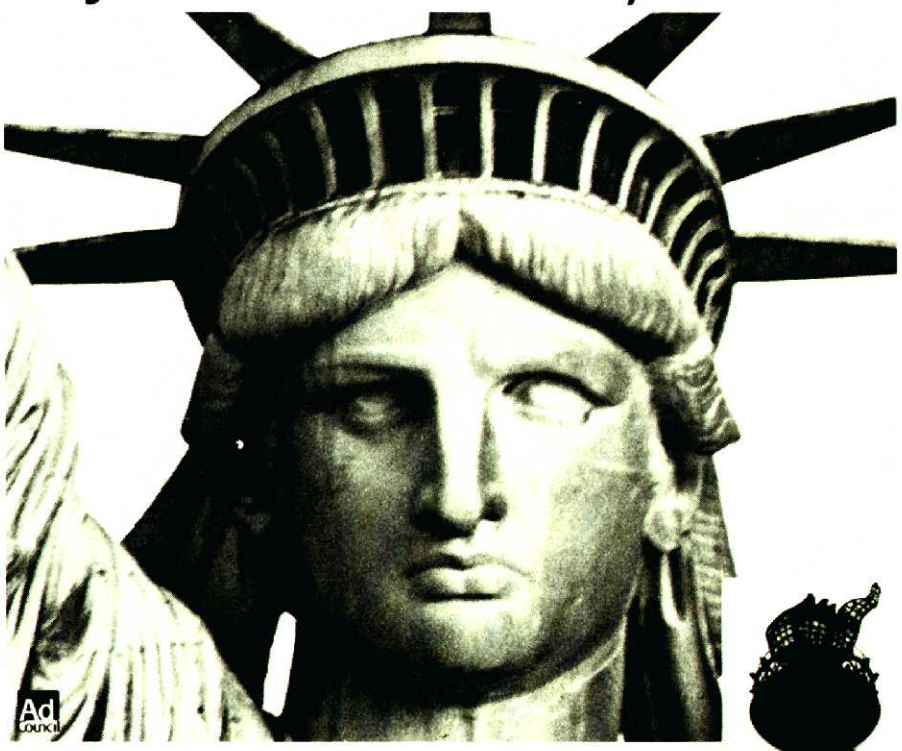

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ELECTRONIC GAMING AND THE HANDICAPPED

Game Controllers for the Handicapped: More Than Just Toys

By DIANE YANKELEVITZ

Last year, Electronic Games reported on severely handicapped people using custom-made adaptive controllers to play videogames. Many people have written to request more information about the source of these controllers and about the people who were featured in the story. The article featured several handicapped people. Here's an update on their progress.

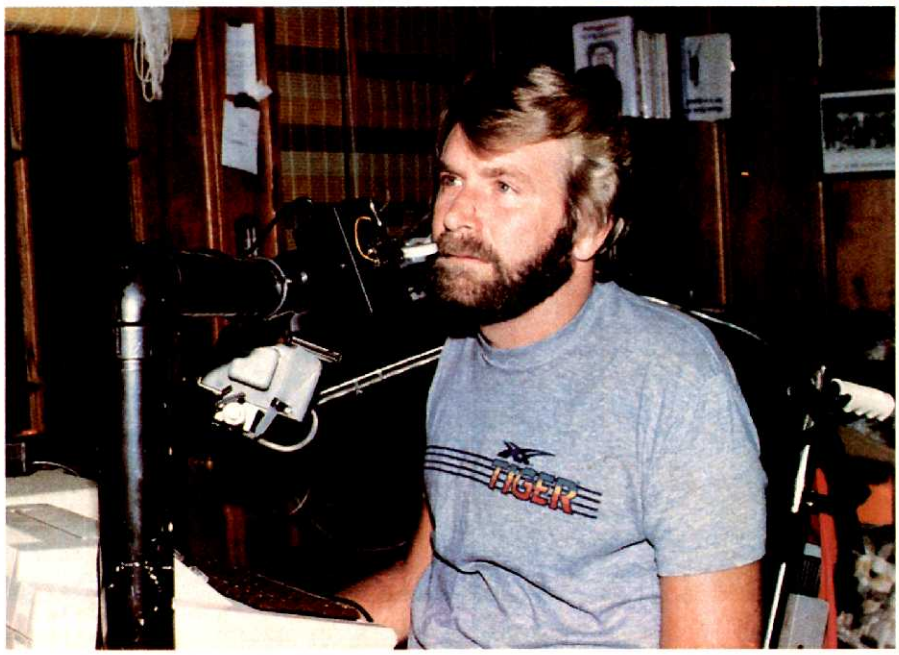
John Carasik, a 15 year old, convinced his mother after a few months of using a head switch to let him try using his right foot. She originally opposed this because of her belief that it would increase his spastic movements. He showed her that although his leg movements looked spastic, he actually did have control. She watched him score consistently higher on the games (over 32,000 on Atari 2600 **Centipede**) until she realized that he did have control of his right leg and that control was increasing as John played. As a result of her observations and those of John's medical supplier, John was deemed capable of operating a power wheelchair with his foot. He's only had it a few months now, but it's something John's mother thought would never be possible for him due to his severe spastic movements.

John's controller is a heavy-duty plastic box with five arcade button switches clamped to the foot of his wheelchair. This gives him eight directions and an action button. A separate reset switch is placed on the seat between his legs, and he also has a switch to operate his multi-game board. For the first time in his life, he can play by himself at something he really enjoys.

Kirk Kilgour was on the USA Olympic volleyball team and played professionally in Italy, where volleyball is a national sport, until his accident. Now in his 30's, Kirk is a quadraplegic able to move only his head and shoulders. In spite of his disability, he coaches volleyball at Pepperdine University in southern California. Since he's a very competitive person and can't compete in sports anymore, he loves to challenge his friends to videogames, which is something he can do very well. He uses a mouth-operated joystick that he helped design. It's a lollipop-shaped disk he can grab onto with his teeth. The joystick is mounted on a stand which clamps to a table on his wheelchair tray.

Kirk's interest in computers started with an Atari 400. He wrote his 1984 coach's manual with the Letter Perfect word processing program. He recently started a new part-time job selling Apple computers to the handicapped. He's using a voice-activated program and exploring environmental control, as well as expanding his knowledge of computers and his own job opportunities.

Tommy Garcia, another 15 year old,

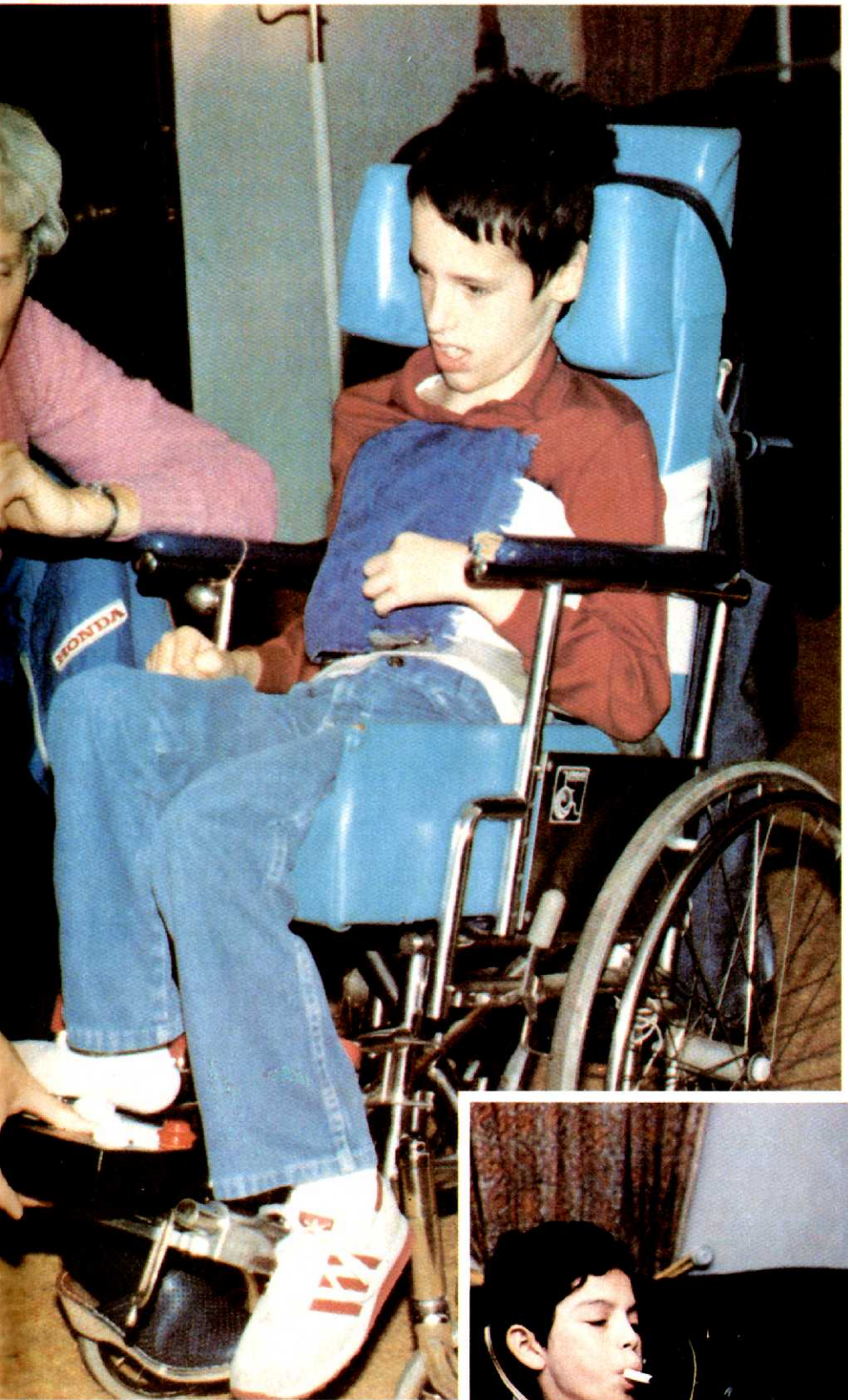


is a C-2 quadraplegic, able to move only his head. He plays videogames with a mouth-operated joystick like Kirk's. But Tommy is on a respirator to help him breathe. He also has a diaphramatic pacemaker. His biggest fear is that his life-support machine will malfunction. He has no control of his chest muscles to breathe on his own; they're paralyzed. He has learned to breathe by himself with his neck muscles and his mother swears that it's due to his home arcading Tommy has a puff switch to "fire" at space aliens on his mouth-operated joystick. When he's on a respirator, he breathes when the respirator does, not necessarily when he needs to fire a quick shot at a space invader closing in on him. When Tommy became paralyzed, he could barely move his head. He moves it so much while playing videogames that his neck muscles have strengthened. His therapist concedes that the games have certainly motivated Tommy, and motivation is the key to learning to neck breathe.

And, if that's not enough to bring tears of joy to your eyes, folks, here's a quote from Rebecca Lloyd, whose 15-year-old son, Adam, became a quadraplegic last May.

"When he came home from the hospital, we hooked up the [mouth-operated] joystick to his videogame and he was thrilled. His friends and sister marvel at how he always outscores them, but the most important thing is what he told us: 'This makes me feel normal again.' "

Electronic games may be more than just games, after all.



Former Olympian Kirk Kilgour (left) watches his points add up. Above, Margaret Carasik and her son, John, adjust the switch that operates his multi-game board. Right, Tommy Garcia and his brother, David, play videogames together.

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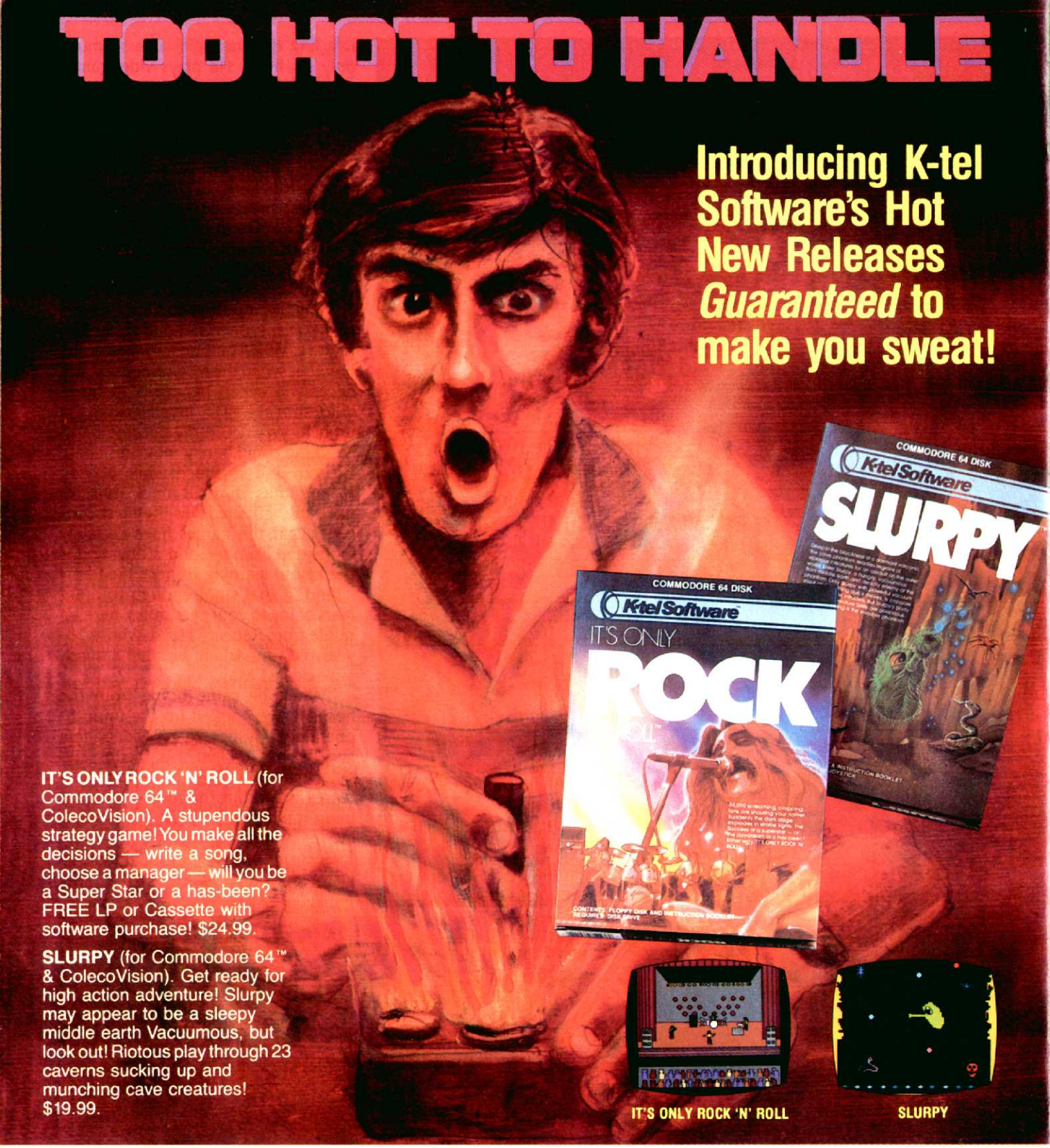

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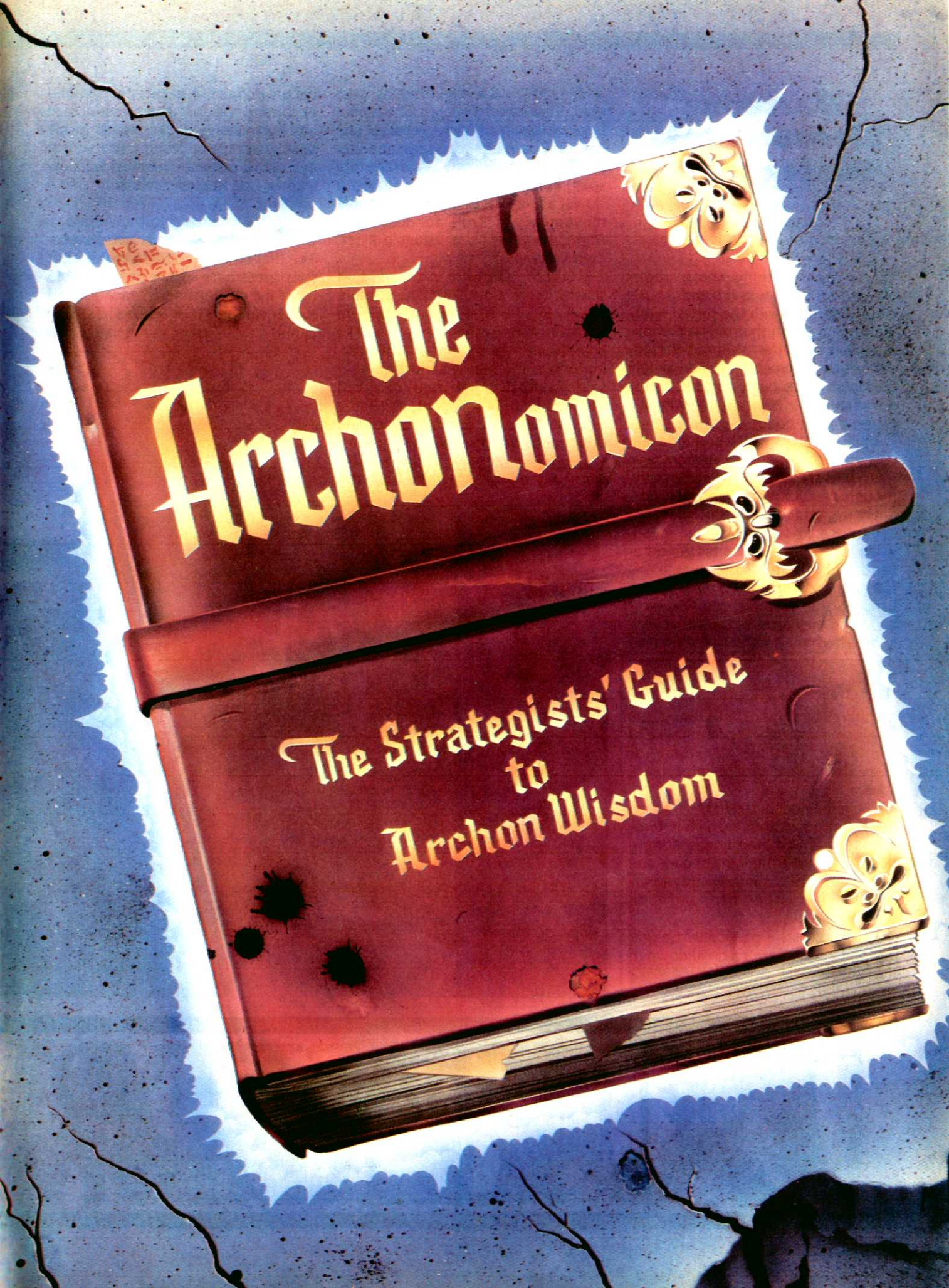

The Archonomicon
The Strategists' Guide to Archon Wisdom

Mastering Electronic Arts' Strategy Game

By BILL KUNKEL

The most striking thing about **Archon** is the way it blends classic chess strategies with the sort of lightning-quick action that only a computer game can offer. Without the advent of the microchip, *Archon* simply could not have been possible unless one wanted to set up a game with live pieces on the board.

Unlike chess, in which both sides are balanced, the soldiers in *Archon* have their powers distributed differently, though overall strength is equal. Coordinating attackers often boast an advantage in terms of, say, speed, while lacking in defense on the other hand. But in spite of the surface differences between a Phoenix and a Banshee, for example, the Forces of Light and the Forces of Dark are evenly matched.

THE GAME

The playfield consists of a fixed number of white and dark squares. On a white position, the representative of the "Light" has the advantage, as does the "Dark" force on a black square.

The remainder of the field is neutral, belonging to neither side. This territory is in constant transition, shifting in slow sequence from light to dark and back again, with the advantage correspondingly passing back and forth on these spaces.

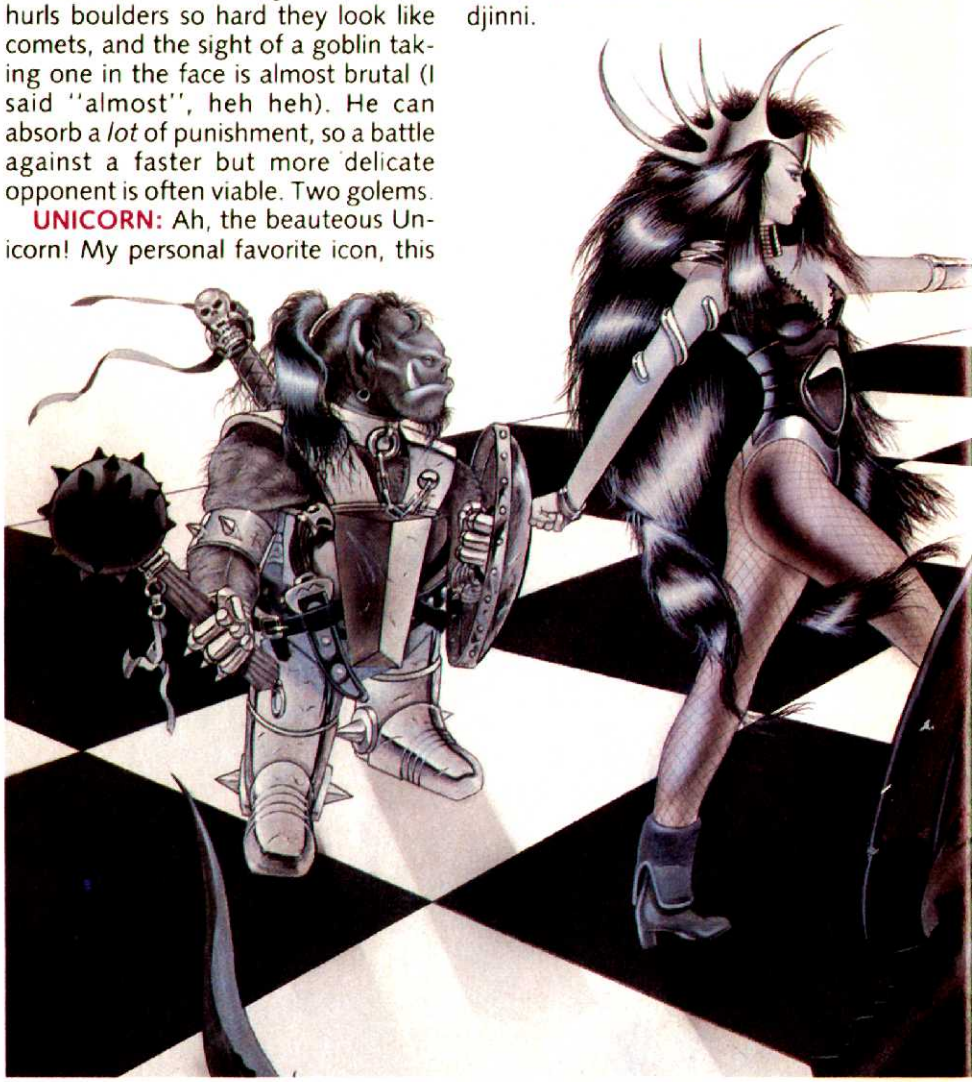
Each icon has a particular strength and weakness. Here's a breakdown of the forces of light along with some commentary.

VALKYRIE: Can fly (thereby pass over other icons) 3 spaces. She carries her spear with only average speed; she has only average strength and her javelin travels slowly. Average life span. In using this icon, go against a slower adversary, one with predictable movements (a Troll, for example). Flight, however, is a valuable asset. Two valkyries.

GOLEM: Ground movement, 3 spaces. He is *slow*. Plodding is more like it. But he is strong! The Golem hurls boulders so hard they look like comets, and the sight of a goblin taking one in the face is almost brutal (I said "almost", heh heh). He can absorb a *lot* of punishment, so a battle against a faster but more delicate opponent is often viable. Two golems.

UNICORN: Ah, the beauteous Unicorn! My personal favorite icon, this baby can move 4 spaces over ground at a good gallop, has fair endurance and hurls energy bolts from her lovely horn so fast the opposing icon may not even see it coming. The most valuable icon in the Kunkel Archonium. Two unicorns.

DJINNI: Guardian to the Wizard, a Djinni can fly 4 spaces at good speed. This dragon-like protector of the Light spits great balls of fire at those who have the misfortune to face it. This sucker can also take *mucho* hits. One djinni.



THE ART AND SCIENCE OF

WIZARD: Analogous to the King in chess, the wizard teleports up to 3 spaces, throws globes of flame from his hands and is somewhat frail, considering his power and position.

What the Wizard has that *really* count, however, are his spells, each of which can be used but once. The entire spell time is contained in the rule book. One wizard.

PHOENIX: This fascinating character can fly 5 spaces. It is durable, issuing a fiery halo explosion that lights up the board for several heartbeats. During this period of transmutation, it is invulnerable, but must be right on top of an enemy icon to do damage. One phoenix.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the starting team for the forces of Darkness:

BANSHEE: It can fly 3 spaces, and emits a sonic wail, which surrounds the Banshee for quite a while. Two banshees.

TROLL: The Golem's opposite number, a Troll moves three spaces over ground with a ponderous tread and chucks boulders. Two trolls.

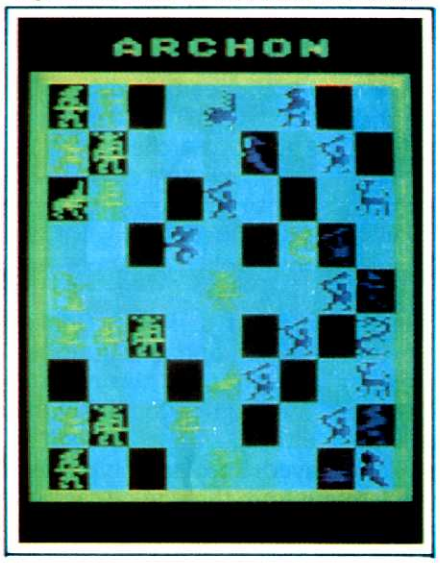
BASILISK: A slightly more powerful, but less durable equivalent to the Unicorn. It moves three spaces via ground and makes a valuable force in one-on-one combat. Two basilisks.

SHAPESHIFTER: If used cannily, this creature capable of flying 5 spaces assumes the form and features of its opposing icon. Always the doppelganger, this far-roving deathbringer is one of the Dark side's most potent forces. One shapeshifter.

DRAGON: Flies 4, hurls fireballs from his mouth, has medium attack speed and a looooong life span. Analogous to the Djinni, he sits on the other side of the Sorceress and is a vital icon in the Dark side's cause. Can fight *anything*.

SORCERESS: The Big Momma of Darkness teleports 3 spaces, moves

Light meets Dark on the Archon battlefield



ARCHON

pretty quickly in battle, hurls lightning bolts at great speed and has an average life span. Largely analogous to the Wizard, she is a great danger because of her potent cadre of enchantments (same as Wizard's).

THE PAWNS: The front line for each army is composed of an infantry army, flanked by a pair of more dangerous adversaries. On the side of Light, valiant Knights do battle with longswords. They are, of course, at a great disadvantage against very fast (Basilisks) or very powerful (Trolls) opponents, since they must engage in combat up close, while dodging the projectiles that their more powerful adversaries can wield. The Knights, when brave, are a potent weapon, however. Against a Shapeshifter, for example, the darkside beastie must become a Knight itself, evening things up considerably. Against the Banshee, it is quite possible to move atop the phantasm and rain down a triphammer series of blows of killing intensity before the robed phantom can emit a deadly volley of screams.

Knights fight best, in fact, from above. Attempt to take up a position just between and atop two barriers, forcing your attacker to move up through the narrow corridor. Before these obstacles can be cleared, deliver as many quick strikes as possible. Knights move 3 spaces over ground, possess normal speed, and a short life span.

There are also two Archers, capable of moving 3 ground spaces and also limited by a brief lifespan. Send Archers against Trolls, whose slow, trudging movements make them easy targets.

In the world of darkness, Goblins are the Knights' opposite number. Lugging truncheons, their stats, speed, etc. are identical to the Knights and their attack strategy should be similarly played. They are more effective fighting from the side rather than above, owing to the manner in which they wield their weapons.

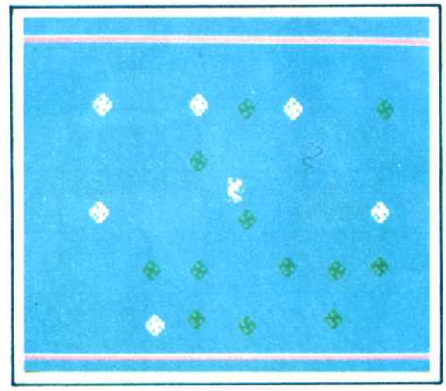
Goblins are flanked by Manticores, with stats similar to Archers, but possessed of a longer life. These nasties launch deadly spikes from their tails and are pretty formidable for first line fighters.

ARCHON

THE PLAY

Icons in this game are moved, by joystick, much like chess pieces. The major differences come in the combat arena sequences, and in the neutral, tone-shifting area that fills much of the board.

Unlike chess, wherein an opponent's piece is taken with a perfunctory tap, the battle for territory in *Archon* is much more vigorously contested. Two icons wishing the same space are transported to a battleground, complete with obstacles. The neutral ground constantly shifts from light to dark. The lighter the area, the stronger the Light piece will be in any combat occuring there, with the opposite holding true for the Dark pieces when the ground turns blacker.



The Dark side's Dragon on the attack

The winner is the first team to wipe out the other, or else take possession of all five "power point" positions, located in a diamond-shaped matrix in the center of all four perimeter rows and in the center of the board.

Icons standing on power points, incidentally, are impervious to spells.

THE STRATEGY

Okay, let's play a quick game in order to give you an idea of how to take on the computer in a typical contest (warning: human players are much less predictable, but generally easier to defeat). We're Light.

Begin by utilizing a Transport spell to send your Unicorn onto the square occupied by the Basilisk to the Sorceress' left. Kill it. While sitting on a white square, safe from attack, use your "shift time" spell, reversing the flow of time back in the direction of light. Now move onto the Dragon's square and kill *it*. At this point, a Goblin may attack. Don't get unnerved. They'll always run at your icons in a straight line, so sit still and just pop it. At the next turn, take on the Sorceress and kill her. If successful, you have now neutralized the Dark Side's ability to cast spells, crippling it. Even if a Shapeshifter moves onto this dark square and slays your Unicorn, the trade was more than worth it. Remember, *you've* still got your spells, and can even revive a dead character. So if you like to fight with the Unicorn, bring it right back.

From here, it's a mopping up operation and, should the Shapeshifter *fail* to slay your heroic equine champion, have the beautiful beast continue his march through the back row until something *does*.

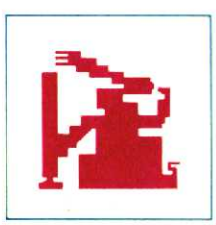
Remember, there's no substitute for combat skill, but after about forty hours of playing time devoted to *Archon* one thing has become radiantly clear: the best defense is a wildman offense. Go right for the jugular and don't stop till the computer cries "I yield!".

IN GENERAL

Wiping out the Wizard or the Sorceress means that your opponent can no longer cast spells. Once that happens, the balance of power is in your favor.

Icons heal damage more quickly on power points. If a game piece is seriously injured, you might consider casting a heal spell.

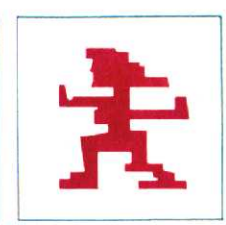
Your own Wizard or Sorceress is of vital importance. Protect him or her well.



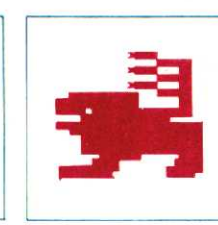
THE WIZARD

THE UNICORN

THE PHOENIX



THE SORCERESS



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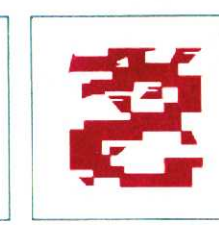

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By BILL KUNKEL

The 3 Stooges In Coin-Opville

THE THREE STOOGES (in "Brides is Brides")

Mylstar

Gosh, what'll they think up next! Imagine, a coin-op license that *actually makes sense!* While the game itself is unspectacular, The 3 Stooges *do* make perfect characters for a slapstick videogame, and "**Brides is Brides**" contains just enough interesting play gambits and cutesy audio-visual touches to make it a success in the currently-vapid world of coin-ops.

The set-up is perfect, beginning with the Stooges' theme song and followed by the appearance of each member of our trinity of pea-brained protagonists (Moe, Larry and Curly), delivering their famous: "Hello," "Hello", "Hellooooo",—"*Hello*!" (That last greeting done in harmony, of course, or something resembling harmony, anyway.)

The first scenario appears once the player has chosen which of the three boobs will act as his or her surrogate (there are literally three sets of joystick-and-button configurations sitting cheek by jowl on the control console, one set beneath each stooge).

Using "Your Favorite Stooge" (wasn't that a sitcom back in the 50's?), the player must first grab a hammer that happens to be hanging in mid-air and start bashing up the furniture in search of three keys. Collect all three and pass into the next room. Meanwhile, your Stooge must avoid being knocked out by a hammer or cold-cocked by a cop—either of which costs a turn. There are also slaps and pies in the face thrown randomly by the other Stooges—just as the player's Stooge has a button for slaps and pie-heaving. Smackeroos and pie-kills merely stun the Stooge for a few seconds, but those seconds *can* be costly.

The game's ultimate object, as quick-witted readers may already have guessed, concerns brides. Yes, brides. For some reason, the hero Stooge has to make his way to the room in which a mad scientist holds the future Mrs. Stooge captive. Stooge by Stooge, players progress until each has a wife to call his own.

As mentioned earlier, considering the current state of arcade games, this *is* a smart license for Mylstar to have picked up. The low-comedy of the Stooges blends perfectly well with the level of activity allowed by the parameters of modern arcade gaming. It's certainly nothing *new*, heaven knows, but it's reasonably cute task-performance stuff.

There is also a minor revival of interest in the Stooges from baby-boom adults who have fond memories of Moe running the blade of a saw down the front of Larry's head, or perhaps grabbing Curly's nose with a pair of pliers and giving it a few good rotations to appropriate sound effects. "The Curly Shuffle" has proven a vi-

THE THREE STOOGES (MYLSTAR)

able novelty song and the video that accompanies it has gotten plenty of play on the air. There must be some eternal truth buried with the eye-pokes, slaps, gouges and pratfalls of the Stooges to keep audiences watching this long.

THE THREE STOOGES (MYLSTAR)

But will they work in videogame format?

The game really should have better graphics. There's nothing *wrong* with the visuals here—sort of a cross between **Zoo Keeper** and **Food Fight** (slightly better looking than the former, while not quite up to the latter)—but in a game as skewed toward immediate sight-and-sound gratification as this, state-of-the-art graphics are really called for.

Still, fans of action/task-oriented contests should definitely check out the Stooges in **"Brides Is Brides."** After all, you couldn't ask for a better context in which to simulate the thrills of eye-gouging, pie-throwing, and face-slapping.

Nyuck, nyuck, nyuck!

SOME OF THIS YEAR'S BEST HIGH-DIVE PERFORMANCES WILL TAKE PLACE ON A KITCHEN TABLE.

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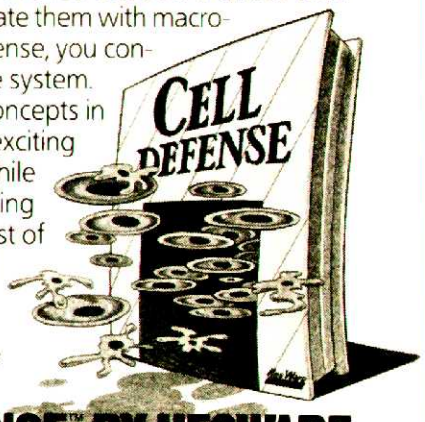

CELL DEFENSE™ BY HESWARE
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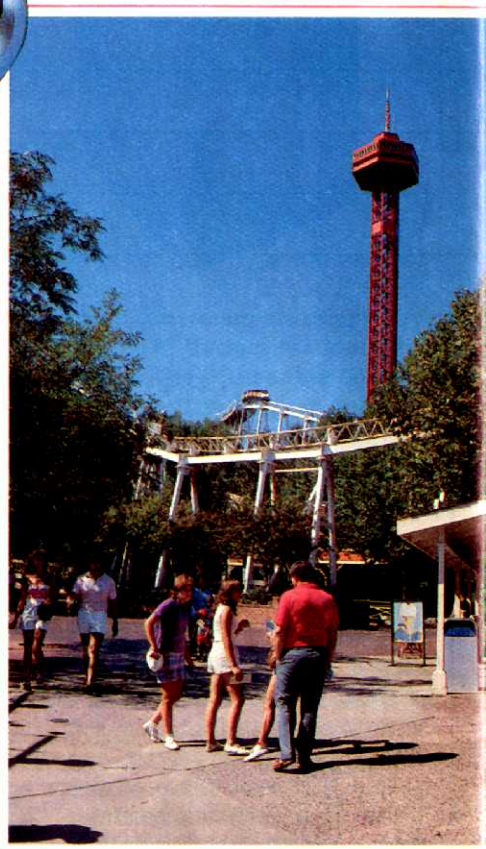
ARCADE

There's Magic in Them Thar Mountains!

By DAVID LUSTIG



Six Flags Magic Mountain amusement park in Valencia, California has something to entertain every member of the family—including the dedicated electronic gamer

In the life of any great arcade, there comes a time when concessions have to be made. The arcader might want to spend Saturday plunking tokens at the local arcade, but the rest of the family wants to spend at least some time together. Pocket the quarters for the time bring and shuffle off to a day without **Q-bert**? You don't have to if you live in the Los Angeles area. Six Flags Magic Mountain, one of the more successful amusement parks in the country, knows the gamer's plight and they want to see the whole family have a good time.

Six Flags-Magic Mountain is a family amusement park just of Interstate 5 in Valencia, in the northwest section of Los Angeles county. What MM offers is more than 100 attractions, including rides, water shows, a separate children's area, an animal farm, top name musical talent, games, activites, and adventures to suit the whole gamut of recreational tastes. One general use ticket includes all rides, shows, attractions and special events. The only additional charges within the park are for food, drinks, merchandise and games of skill.

Wait a minute, did I just say games of skill?

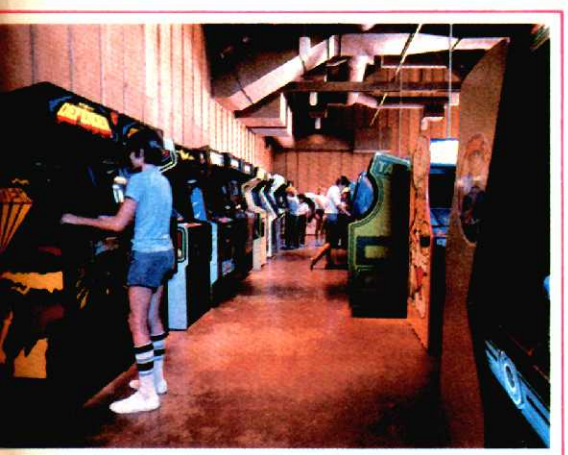
Roller coaster rides alone do not a modern amusement park make these days, and within the confines of Magic Mountain are over 250 video coin-ops, pinballs and skee-balls to keep even the fussiest quarter-plunker busy. Think they were put in at random just to keep a few people happy? Hardly. The Six Flags organization is owned by Bally Midway, so you know the machines inside the park are some of the newest and from all the top coin-op manufacturers.

If enjoying arcade games isn't enough, how about a brand new hands-on computer center sponsored by Texas Instruments? Just recently opened, it is a first-of-its-kind, 3,500-square foot facility where adults, teens and children can try their hand at 20 education and special interest computer software packages. But more about that later. Back to the arcade games.

Park planners were wise enough not to put all 250 games in one place—they broke them up into four separate areas, one near the main entrance, one near Colossus (the world's largest dual-track, all-wood roller coaster), one near Roaring Rapids (a water version of the traditional roller coaster) and a fourth near the hair-raising Free Fall attraction. Free Fall, for the uninitiated, is a padded gondola ride that goes to the top of a 10-story tower and then drops at speeds up to 55 mph. Magic Mountain man-

AMERICA

In the shadow of the Colossus, the world's largest all-wood roller coaster, gamers can find the latest coin-ops, as well as old friends such as *Pac-Man*.



agement claims it's very similar to skydiving. Personally, I'll stick with the arcade games!

Tokens, not quarters, rule the machines inside Magic Mountain, and the coin changers will be glad to dispense four for one dollar or 24 for five dollars.

Arcade attendants don't mind food or drinks near the machines, but politely frown upon anyone putting munchies directly on the games. The current favorites? **Dragon's Lair** is still number one, but those old standbys, **Pac-Man** and **Ms. Pac-Man** come in close second and third. And for those into skeeball, a well-stocked redemption center is ready to dispense some really nice prizes.

All the arcade areas are well-lit and there's plenty of room in the aisles. There's no overcrowding and accidental bumping while players are trying to rack up a high scores at this place! And parents need not worry about leaving part of their family at the video games while they trundle elsewhere in the park. While everyone is naturally "on-their-own," Magic Mountain prides itself on plenty of security people, some uniformed, others in plain clothes, to insure that everything runs smoothly.

The busiest times for the arcades are from about 2:30 p.m. until 4 p.m., advice to heed for those who need peace and quiet while at the controls.

The Texas Instruments Computer Center is located near the front of the park. The Center encourages an open "user friendly" atmosphere by providing visitors with access to a variety of software applications on TI's 99/4A computers. Besides the entertainment angle, home management and education are also featured.

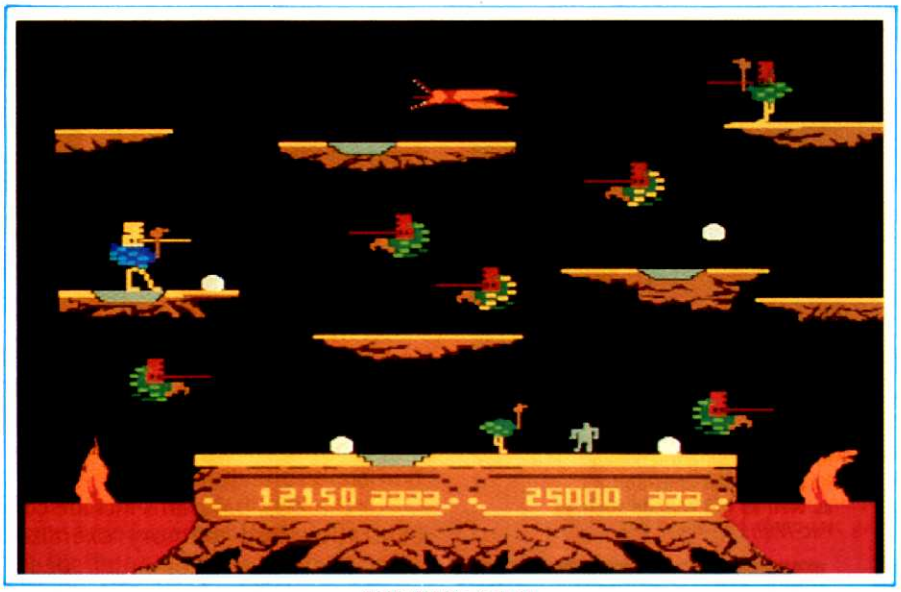
For the kids, programs include concentration and memory exercises, color graphics and computer speech, number and letter recognition and the Homonym Machine, a language exercise with words that have the same pronunciation but different meanings.

For the older folks, there are computer programs on career choices, aerodynamics, touch typing, concentration and mathematics as well as biorhythms, a smoker's test and a number of other mind-boggling experiences.

Want to know and see more? Magic Mountain is 35 minutes north of downtown Los Angeles and is open daily from May 20 through September 11, and weekends and school holidays for the remainder of the year. Operating hours vary, so if you're not too close to Valencia, drop a line to Magic Mountain, P.O. Box 5500, Valencia, CA 91355. The telephone numbers are (805) 255-4100 and (213) 992-0884. Ticket prices are $11.95 for adults, $5.95 for children under 48 inches in height, and kids two years old and under are admitted free. There's plenty of parking, plenty of rides, a lot of entertainment and most importantly, plenty of arcade games.

PROGRAMMABLE PARADE

The First Releases for the 7800



7800 JOUST (ATARI)

JOUST

Atari/Atari 7800

Atari has yet to miss its mark with even one of the many excellent home versions of **Joust**, and the 7800 cartridge is no exception. This arcade action contest lets one player compete against the machine, or go head-to-head against a human opponent, and it features all the bells and whistles any *Joust* fan could ask for in a home cartridge.

All the elements of the arcade game have been left intact, down to the claw that reaches out of molten lava pools to grab any unwary fliers who get too close. The pterodactyl is as lethal as ever, and the opposing knights waste no time in closing in for the kill. The knights are rendered in near-perfect detail, while color differences between player-controlled heroes helps to avoid any confusion during the game.

The object, as always, is to fly through the air, taking on all comers in a duel to the death. Whenever two knights meet, the one whose lance is higher wins the match. The ledges which can be used to take a breather get smaller and less numerous as the game goes on, while dangers increase from every side.

The 7800 translation of *Joust* is excellent. About the only problem players might have is finding a copy.

(Tracie Forman)

CENTIPEDE

Atari/Atari 7800

Among the first releases for Atari's 7800 is **Centipede**, a souped-up version of the bug-blasting game that's still a favorite in the arcades. The graphics are slightly prettier than even the 5200 version's, though still not *exactly* of coin-op quality.

One player can go it solo, two players can alternate turns, or two gamers can use both on-screen cannons cooperatively against the swarms of invading insects. Another option lets gamers play simultaneously, but competitively. (Try to shoot the other player's cannon while bug-bombing.)

The action's as fast and frenzied as it is on the coin-op, and the 7800's controllers work well, even on quick diagonal moves. Each attack wave seemed slightly shorter than it was in the coin-op, with both the dragonfly and the flea appearing soon after the player clears the first screen.

Atari has yet to publish a bad home version of *Centipede*, and the 7800 cartridge is certainly up to previous high standards.

(Tracie Forman)

WING WAR

Imagic/ColecoVision

For centuries, dragons have been a focal point of myth and lore. Part of their enduring mystique probably lies in the fact that none have been seen recently (more's the pity!). But, thanks to Imagic's **Wing War** cartridge, gamers not only get to see a real "live" specimen, they actually get to become one!

The objective of this 40-screen, one-player game is to amass points by destroying natural enemies with fireballs, and collecting and combining fire, air, and water crystals for strength, replacement fireballs, and creation of the Super Crystal needed to battle the Rock Demon for its prized 5,000 point diamond.

Starting in the dragon's den with one active creature (and two eggs in reserve), players fly through the richly-colored and highly detailed caverns, landscape, and airways by pressing the right action button once for each wing flap. Momentum and inertia have been programmed in, so direction changes are very realistic.

The left action button is used to unleash a fireblast, while the joystick controls directional movement down, left, or right. Picking up crystals, or flying eggs, is accomplished by push-

ing the wheel up when the dragon's feet are touching the desired object.

These items are redeemed for points and extra strength or fireballs when deposited back in the den. Of course natural enemies badger, bother, and otherwise hamper the dragon's activities.

Each contact with other creatures or their firepower, reduces the flying lizard's strength gradually until it finally turns black and goes belly-up on terra firma. At this point another egg (if there's one in the den) hatches with the standard ten fireballs and hit points.

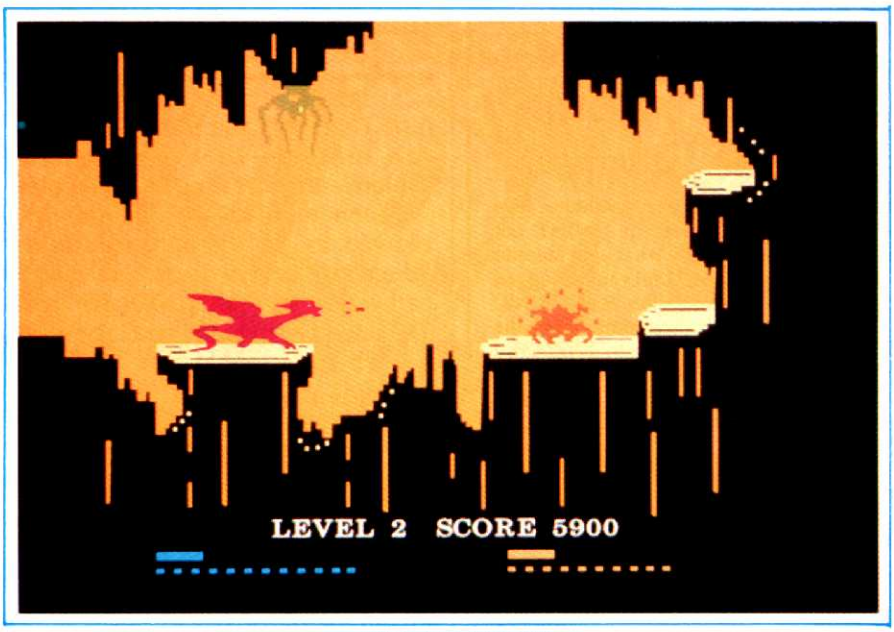
The nemeses, which include ropers, fire demons, dragonflies, bee swarms, spiders, bats, birds, hydras, griffins, beehives, and rock demons, are worth from 75 to 500 points. Most turn into useful crystals when dispatched.

Anything carried by the dragon gets dropped upon contact with a foe, the top of the sky, or the earth itself. This makes for tricky maneuvering, especially when carrying air crystals in the caverns. The tough thing about air crystals is that they dissolve on contact with the ground or any of the floating rock islands dotting the skyline. It's like catching soap bubbles, gentle work indeed!

The control setup works well and the graphics are nothing short of amazing. As usual, Imagic knows how to get the most out of a system's visual capabilities (Coleco, take note!).

The animation is first-rate, though the screens don't scroll. Instead they change abruptly. It's annoying at first, but becomes less of a problem as play time increases. *Wing War's* sound are bare-bones sparse, with flapping wings, whooshing fireballs and occasionally screeching birds, and a slightly musical diamond just about wrap it up. Failure to make better use of the CV's audio potential is *Wing War's* biggest fault.

(Ted Salamone)



WING WAR (IMAGIC)

THE HEIST

MicroFun/ColecoVision

Once again MicroFun has done a great job of putting a game originally programmed for a computer onto a ColecoVision cartridge.

In **The Heist,** the player assumes the role of Graham Crackers, ace superagent, in a mission to infiltrate a museum. Hidden in one of the famous artworks is a secret microdot capable of destroying the world, so Crackers' job is to collect all the paintings contained in the game's 90 rooms.

This multi-level action contest displays up to three floors of the museum at a time, but the real trick is to figure out how to reach all the areas. Elevators, escalators, and keys to locked areas prove helpful, while dangerous robots, sweeper drones, falling boxes and agent-crushing stompers are some of the perils to avoid.

The Heist offers good graphics and sound, but its real appeal is its strategic elements. Though the rooms are placed exactly the same way in every new game, it should take quite a while before players figure out the complete layout of the museum.

(Tracie Forman)

GATEWAY TO APSHAI

Epyx/ColecoVision

Gateway to Apshai elevates the action-adventure genre to new heights of sophistication, both in graphics and in the game itself. Originally programmed for Atari and Commodore 64 computers, this ColecoVision offering is currently the best of the videogame adventure crop.

Using the joystick and keypad, players move the explorer through eight underground complexes, each with 16 dungeons, and each dungeon contains over 50 areas to conquer. The farther gamers descend, the more plentiful and useful the treasures—but the monsters get bigger and meaner

THE HEIST (MICRO FUN)

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fast! This is not the sort of game you can master—or even partially explore—the first few times you play.

Seven minutes are all the time allowed to get through a particular dungeon. Locked doors and hidden pathways may lead to valuable items like bows, arrows, or healing salves, but they can also conceal dangerous pit traps.

The keypad buttons control the mode the on-screen fighter is in; he can have his sword in hand and be ready to fight, or might try spell-casting, using keys, or changing the items in hand. Proceed slowly (and cast the proper spell) to look for cleverly-concealed secret doors, or check treasures for traps that could be locked within. The possibilities are almost endless.

(Tracie Forman)

FROGGER II: THREEDEEP

Parker Brothers/Atari 5200

To paraphrase a Muppet song, it's still not easy being green in this sequel to the original **Frogger**. There are no roads to cross or trucks to avoid in this three-screen action contest, although the basic play-mechanic borrows a lot from its popular parent.

The first screen will be most familiar to *Frogger* fans, though there are a few new twists to the journey to safety. The little froggie starts out at the bottom of the river, and has to swim up the screen to the logs overhead. A diving turtle periodically passes through, and hitching a ride on its back can speed Frogger safely to the top. But hang on too long and our favorite fly-eater could end up farther down than he started—or even as a snack for the various sea creatures that swim across the screen.

If the frogger lands on a log he's already visited, he's transported to the water's surface. Here, there are two possible objects: the frog can try to hop into the life preserver pulled across the top of the screen by a tugboat, which starts him back at the seafloor screen; or he can try to jump on the back of the henpecking mother duck that swims back and forth tending her young. Land squarely on her back and she takes off to the third screen.

Here, Frogger finally gets his chance to enter the Pearly Gates themselves, accomplished with the help of a trampoline cloud below. Using the cloud to gain momentum, the little green hero has to leap from one friendly creature's back to another, while avoiding the jaws of his enemies.

This game doesn't break any new ground in play-action, but it's an entertaining sequel that adds interesting new elements to one of home arcading's most popular games. Graphics are colorful and well-detailed, and sound effects are excellent.

(Tracie Forman)

FROGGER II: THREEDEEP (PARKER)

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* **ANSWER:** Al Hodge played Captain Video; Don Hastings was Ranger.

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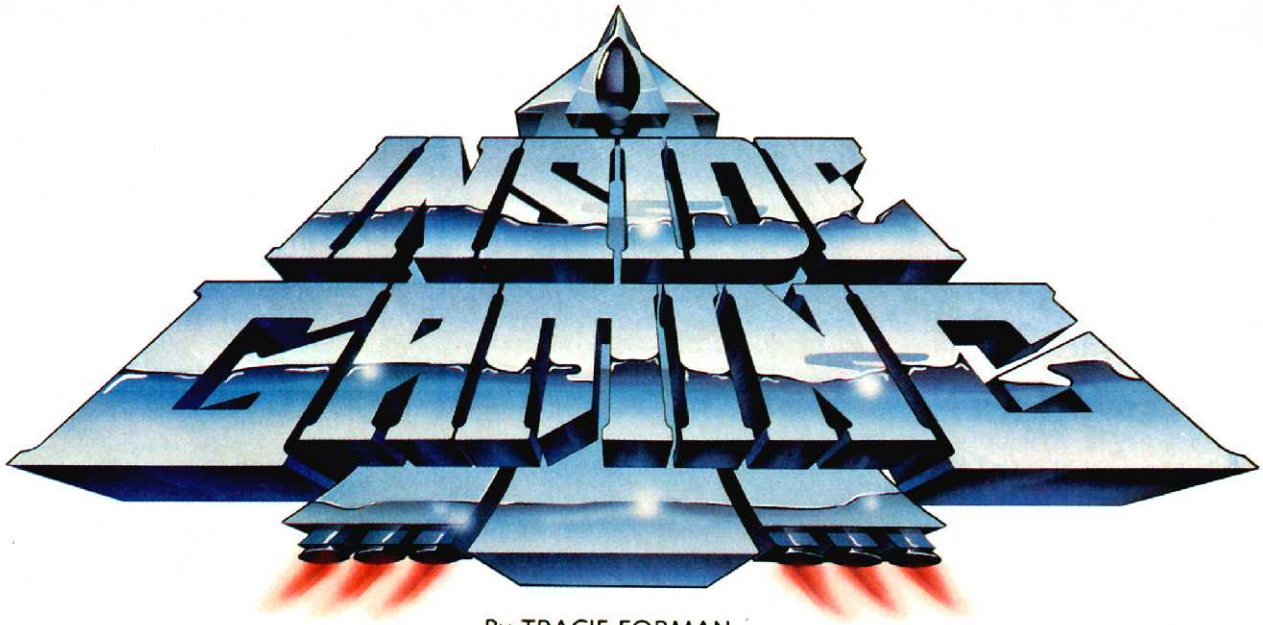


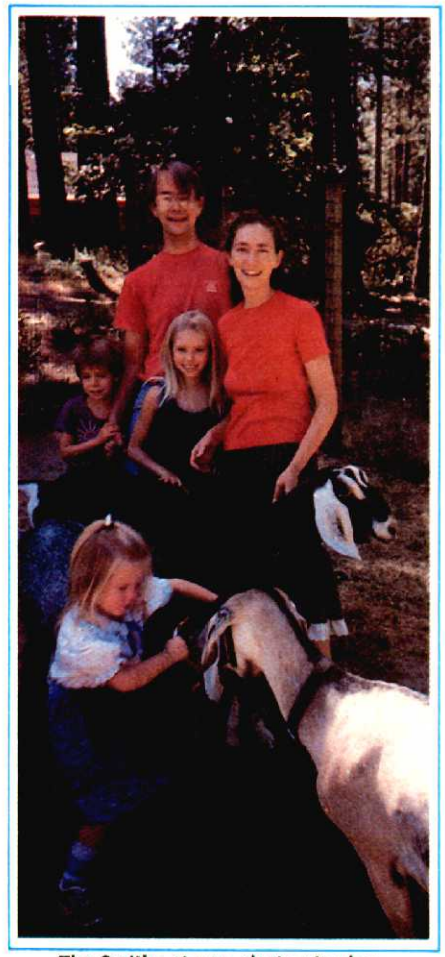
By TRACIE FORMAN

Stuart Smith: Master of Mythology

I've been fascinated by games since, oh, forever," notes Stuart Smith, designer of Arkie Award contender **Return of Heracles** (Quality Software/ Apple, Atari, C-64). But the fame and fortune associated with game designing wasn't the reason the 35-year-old Northern Californian chose the life of a micro-maven. His motive was more personal than even wanting creative freedom: he wants to be close to his wife and children.

The Smith think tank, where Stuart planned and programmed Quality Software's **Fracas, Ali Baba,** and *Return of Heracles*, is just a stone's throw from the family's home in the Sierra foothills, where he lives with his wife Cindy, daughters Aleta, 9 and Jalana, 2, and five-year-old son Lon. Cindy often play-tests Stuart's works in progress, and even the kids sometimes lend a hand.

Like many of the old-guard game designers, Smith is a self-taught computer programmer, although he holds a B.A. in physics from Michigan State, where he met Cindy over a friendly ping-pong game. (She beat him, and he subsequently practiced for months). He also has a Master's in math from Berkeley, but his first experience with computer programming was on-the-job training. As a college freshman, he landed a summer job with the Federal Highway Administration, programming job training aids. With the help of a steady diet of computer manuals, he soon became a seasoned pro.

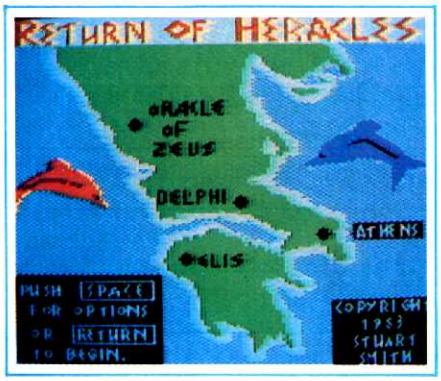


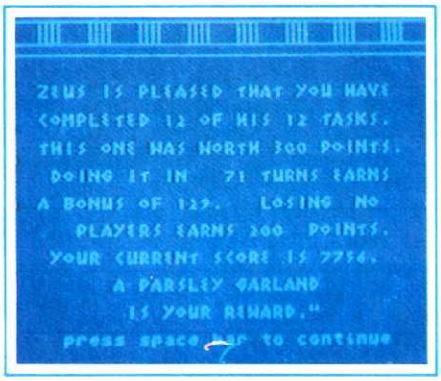
The Smiths at non-electronic play.

Smith went on to write a few business-oriented programs. "I think I ended up selling 15 copies of **Quick & Clean** (a COBOL generation program)," he recalls. "But at $2500 a shot, it wasn't bad." Twenty-five *hundred* dollars? "Often," he explains, "If you ask a higher price, businesses want the product more."

Although his future looked promising in the business software field, "Business programming required working on mainframes. I didn't want to be away from home, and games can be programmed at home." 1973 was Stuart's last year as a commuter.

Like many of electronic gaming's top designers, Smith has a strong background in non-electronic gaming. He played a number of war games as an adolescent, and he and Cindy still play in "Diplomacy" tournaments. "The Call of Cthulu," a non-electronic role-playing game, is his current favorite, since it has "less overt violence than 'Dungeons and Dragons'." He finds philosophy, religion, and mythology more suited to his gaming tastes




ZEUS IS PLEASED THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED 12 OF HIS 12 TASKS.
THIS ONE WAS WORTH 300 POINTS.
DOING IT IN 71 TURNS EARNS A BONUS OF 129. LOSING NO PLAYERS EARNS 200 POINTS.
YOUR CURRENT SCORE IS 7756.
A PARSLEY GARLAND IS YOUR REWARD."
press space bar to continue

RETURN OF HERACLES (QUALITY SOFTWARE)

than hack-and-slash oriented quests.

The designer's own current computer game favorites include the **Ultima** series, **Star Raiders,** and Infocom's text adventures. ("They have a great sentence parser.") He's not much of an arcader, though. "I usually drop one or two quarters in a new coin-op, but that's about it.

"I personally like games where it's not just hand-eye coordination, but also involves strategy. That philosophy is obvious in both *Ali Baba* and *Return of Heracles,* which are animated, but not real-time action games. "Delayed play means more people can play, plan, and strategize," he says. More than 20 people can participate in a *Return of Heracles* game, reflecting Smith's opinion that games should be a means of social interaction, not played alone in a deserted house.

Joystick-controlled, menu-driven options are also a Stuart Smith trademark. "A game should be easy to get into," he says. "Just because a game is realistic doesn't mean it has to be hard to play. The challenge should be in the game itself, not in learning how to use it. It's easy to make a difficult game that's still easy to use."

At the time of the interview, Stuart was busy with his newest creation, an adventure game generator that will be sold under the Electronic Arts banner. Its built-in game will have Babylonian mythos as background, and will be about "the roots of religion."

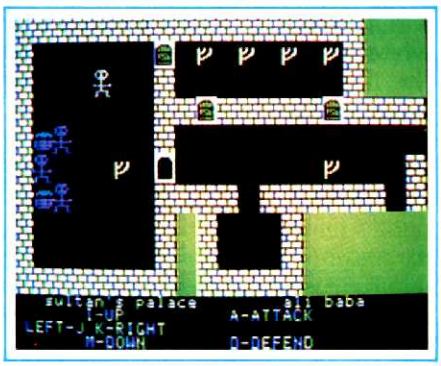
The program will allow users to generate different types of adventure games to play themselves or, Smith hopes, give to friends. An edit mode allows existing games to be modified, and game creators will be able to draw their own characters, assign them specific attributes, create objects, or even modify the magic spells built into the program. Different types of wandering monsters will be the wild cards that can lead even the best-laid plans awry, since they'll have definite minds of their own.

Certain role-playing aspects will also be included, such as twelve specific characteristics to assign, skill that can improve with experience, and a choice of character races.

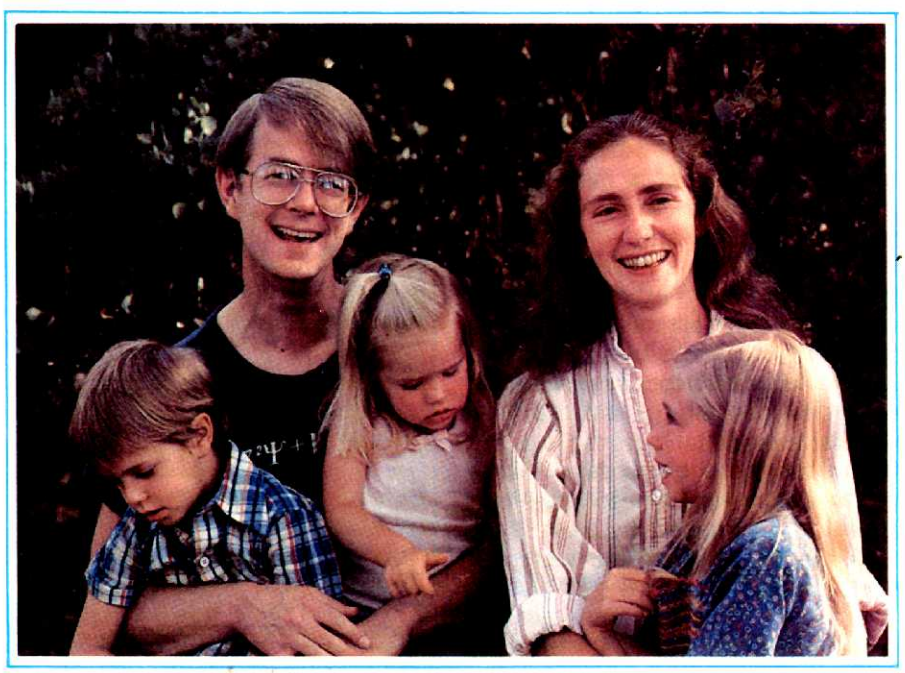
"In one sense," grins Smith, "this is going to be the game that puts me out of business."

Does he have any advice for aspiring computer game designers? "Creativity is the most important factor. There are too many "me-too" games out there. What a new designer really needs is an original idea for a really different game. Then, you've got to have a thorough knowledge of the machine you're working with, then push it to its limits."

Smith's own plans aren't set beyond finishing his adventure generator, but despite his prediction about putting himself out of business, his is a name that gaming enthusiasts will probably hear more of in the future.



ALI BABA (QUALITY SOFTWARE)



Stuart and Cindy Smith and family.

By THE GAME DOCTOR

The Questions Gamers Ask and Ask and Ask and...

There are very few things about electronic gaming and, hence, about *Electronic Games*, that have not changed considerably since the first issue appeared in October 1981. The larger matters, however, don't go away. Players still bite their nails waiting for a favorite game to appear in a version compatible with *their* system. Hobbyists continue to debate which computer is *best*—and, ultimately, we get letters.

These letters touch every subject, from requests for information on videogame systems that no longer viably exist to gasps of outrage over a bad review given to a reader's favorite-game-in-the-world (this week). You can bet your last token that a large portion of every day's mail consists of Q's for our Q&A column.

As the presiding resident at Electro General Hospital since it first opened its doors, the old doc has seen it all. As the demographics of both the hobby and of EG's readership mirrored the growing sophistication—not to mention chronological age—of electronic game players, the number of genuinely well-conceived questions has grown markedly. The really odd (but usually endearing) questions turn up less and less, while the truly tough queries have caused the doc to turn more and more to outside consultants (sorry, folks, no fee-splitting). In the early days, it was a rare question—and I mean *rare*—that so much as furrowed my brow.

In the beginning, these were the most popular questions:

Q: *Will videogames hurt my TV set?*

A: Fear of CRT damage ran high among players right through 1981, when most gamers were calmed by a comprehension of the pure, unadulterated facts. Yes, many early **Pong**-type videogame systems unwittingly damaged TV sets. The bright white graphics—usually constituting the perforated "net" line running down the center of the screen, two paddles and the square "ball"—could literally burn themselves into the television's picture tube, leaving an unsightly remnant of the center line in particular (since it was static), marring regular transmission. It was simply a problem that never occurred to many of the early dedicated chip-type game system manufacturers—a market that proliferated with fast-buck artists by the mid-70's. Christmas of 1976 saw retail shelves crammed with hard-wired ball-and-paddle systems from no less than *70* different manufacturers!

By 1978, however, the ascension of programmable systems, particularly the Atari 2600, rendered the question moot. Inherent in the software design for these systems was a "color shift" facility that automatically altered on-screen hues if the game remained inactive for a pre-set period of time (5 to 10 minutes).

Exceptions, alas, prove the rule. Even today, a piece of software occasionally reaches the market without proper protection against "burn-in",

Some of the earliest videogame machines.

but the games must be totally static and left on for a few hours before anything noticeable will appear on the picture tube.

Q: *Please, please, PLEASE tell me how to find the Easter Egg in* **Adventure***!!!!!*

A: You see, it all started out like this: during a pre-publication interview with Atari's software-development honcho for the 2600 Steve Wright, a most intriguing piece of information was unearthed. During the development of Atari's *Adventure* cartridge for the VCS, the designer had thrown in a little bonus. If the player performed a certain sequence of tasks, a set of initials—the designer's—mysteriously appeared! What fun! Only thing was, the designer in question didn't let Atari in on the secret until it was too late. Once the immediate ruffling of feathers calmed, Steve saw the potential in introducing similar "Easter Eggs", as he dubbed them, in all future 2600 software releases. The "eggs" became not only the single most commented-upon piece of information in our entire first issue, but a staple of gaming to this very day.

EG holds firm, however, in our promise to Steve *never* to reveal *how* the egg might be found. But we'll give an EG T-shirt to the first reader to identify the rascal whose initials lit up this mad case of Easter Egg-omania.

And speaking of T-shirts...

Within very few installments, Q&A's questions started getting so good that we felt some sort of prize was in order for the best question each issue. Since the prize was a T-shirt, the winning reader was contacted for his or her shirt size once the best Q was tagged.

There have also been questions that are asked at least once every month, without exception. These include:

Q: *What is the difference between a programmable videogame and a computer?*

A: A programmable videogame is an electronic entertainment system, constructed along the lines of a computer, but dedicated exclusively to running videogame software.

A computer is capable of reading ROM while possessing RAM (see next question). Among other things, it may play electronic games—it may even have been *designed* primarily to run entertainment software—but its interactive nature, allowed by its keyboard, makes it a different animal altogether.

Q: *What is the difference between RAM and ROM?*

A: ROM means Read Only Memory, while RAM is Random Access Memory. Put succinctly, most cartridges require only ROM capacity, i.e., the computer only needs sufficient memory to read it in order to display it. RAM is the free-floating memory the computer can put to use at the discretion of the software or user.

Q: *Why won't System A's software run on my System B hardware?*

A: Because they built it that way.

Multi-formats are not new with computers and electronic gaming systems. Owners of Beta video casette recorders know the anguish of seeing their favorite movie available only on the more popular VHS format. Then, of course, audiophiles will remember those audio-Edsels, the 8-track cassette recorder and quadraphonic sound.

But only in this field has non-compatibility been so mind-shatteringly rampant. Imagine if Sony TV sets could pick up ABC, but not CBS or NBC. Or if you had to own a Zenith to see PBS broadcasts. That, I'm afraid, is how it has been in the electronic gaming world.

Modern times, as mentioned before, have brought with them a more sophisticated type of questioner. Instead of wondering if games will hurt the TV, today's questioner ponders further:

Q: *What are the virtues of a monitor over a standard TV set?*

A: Running computer of videogame systems through the old home TV requires an RF box. The Radio Frequency switcher translates the signals from the source system into visual images on the CRT (cathode ray tube). With a monitor the RF is bypassed, and the console plugged directly into a socket, allowing virtually perfect transmission. No more lines, or the dreaded "RF hash" that disfigures so much of modern gaming.

Another thing many players wonder about is the question of playfields—as seen on TV commercials, magazine ads, packaging and magazines, such as EG.

Q: *How do I know if the representation of the game screens I see in ads on TV and in magazine are the real McCoy? Are they photographs or drawings, and if they are* artist renderings, why?

A: First off, once you've developed an eye for it, it's pretty easy to tell a photo from a drawing. As a rule, drawings are so *clean* looking, and make such a point of including all the visual game elements. In fact, that's one of the primary reasons for companies going with facsimile playfields in the first place. The company wants potential purchasers to see all those cute little characters that have been so painstakingly programmed into its software. Alas, in the course of actual gameplay, there are seldom occasions when everybody gets into the picture simultaneously. Activision's drawn playfields are a good example of a screen representation that plays fair—they look just like the real thing, *sans* embellishments—which lets the gamer see all that the software has to offer.

Images on monitors are notoriously difficult to photograph—the surface of the screen is curved, for example, causing most shots to "bend" at the top and bottom.

Many of our readers own systems that are being phased out of existence, and these missives are as sad as they are plentiful.

Q: *Why aren't there any new games available for my Vectrex/Intellivision/Odyssey²) etc., etc.?*

A: Because business has a bottom line—profitability—not every product will last forever. Take your system for what it is, and what is was. If it gave you many hours of pleasure, consider that as ample value for your purchase.

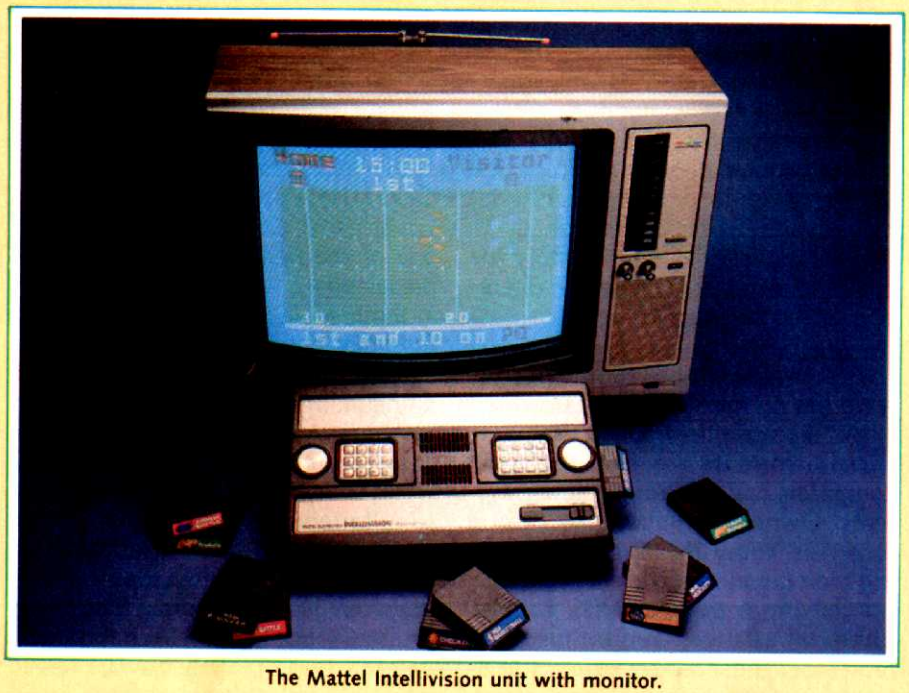
Anyway, in business, nothing is forever. Today's computer bargain is tomorrow's technological antique. Were the people who purchased the Atari VCS in 1978 for $200 cheated because they can now pick one up at less than a third of that price? Doesn't six years of use count for something?

That's the *consumer's* bottom line.

Sure, prices *do* drop. But, lately, many readers have wondered about this:

Q: *Why is it that virtually all forms of computer hardware from CPU's to peripherals such as printers and modems, have dropped in price while disk*

Q&A



The Mattel Intellivision unit with monitor.

drives have remained at a price point that hasn't moved much in the past year?

A: This is simply because, except for disk drives, prices on hardware and peripherals have dropped in keeping with what has become known as the "economics of silicon". Drives, however, still require a great deal of old-fashioned *machinery*, and although they are produced almost exclusively outside the U.S.—in places such as Singapore and Hong Kong—it has still proven impossible to get the price much lower. It's not for lack of trying, either; the first company to produce a low-priced, quality drive will sell them like mad.

Finally, we come to the single most frequently-asked Q of them all. This one comes in many forms. Sometimes the writer sends lovely drawings, or writes verse or even designs for videogames (!) Others enclose tokens—since the doc revealed his passion for collecting arcade tokens you wonderful folks have swelled that collection to many times its original size. Sometimes, however, as when accompanying this most popular question, the cynical old medic suspects a gentle form of bribery is at play.

The questions?

Q: *WHY DON'T YOU EVER ANSWER MY QUESTIONS?*

A: Well, the doc has tried to explain many times over the years why it is not possible to personally answer each and every Q that comes our way. This does not stop readers from going crazy when they write lots of letters and none of them ever make it to print. "Do you hate me?" one sensitive soul inquiried. "I have written you over and over, and never got any answers." The despondence of these letters has an unsettling effect on this old cartridge croaker's constitution.

Many times, the reason a regular writer doesn't get his or her letters published is that because they're such good questions, dozens of other readers have mused along similar lines.

On other occasions, it's simply because the page came out twelve lines too long—and yours was the Q that made the column fit perfectly. It's unfair, but then, very few things in this life *are*.

Okay, so there you have it: an overview of what's been on the collective mind of the erstwile readership over our first third of a decade.

ADDENDUM: You know, it almost slipped the doctor's mind, but I just realized that I haven't answered any *new* questions this month. Worse, we haven't awarded a T-shirt for best Q! Gasp!

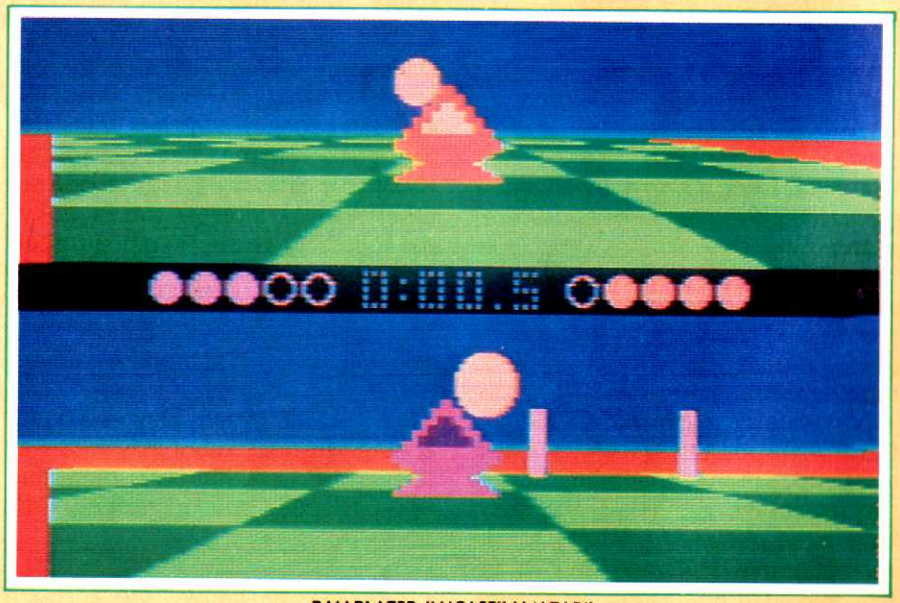
Okay, so here we go:

Q: *I've heard that the Atari computer versions of the Lucasfilm games will be 32K cartridges. As owner of a 600XL with only 16K resident memory, will I be able to play this software on my computer or will Atari break my heart?*

(Wayne Unger, New York City)

A: Yes, the two games from Lucasfilm's computer software division are indeed 32K cartridges—but you'll *still* be able to play them on your 16K 600XL. The Lucasfilm whizzes worked out a bank-switching routine that flip-flops two 16K sections, so that the system is never forced to read more data than its memory can handle, while still providing a full 32K of thrills and excitement.

So there you have it, the best of the old, the best of the new and a T-shirt too!



BALLBLAZER (LUCASFILM/ATARI)

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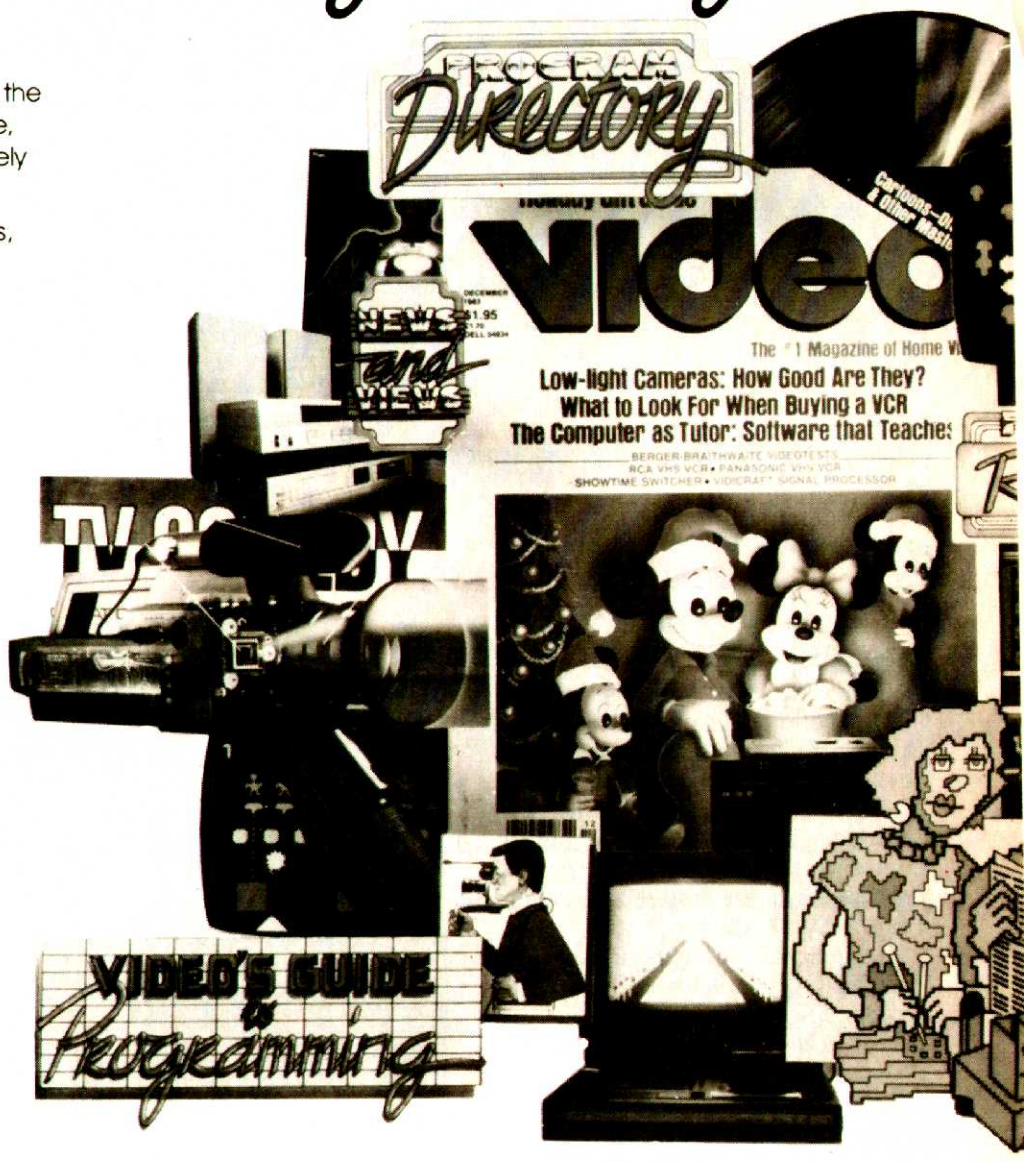
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By JOYCE WORLEY

Stand-Alones Are Stars For Holiday Giving

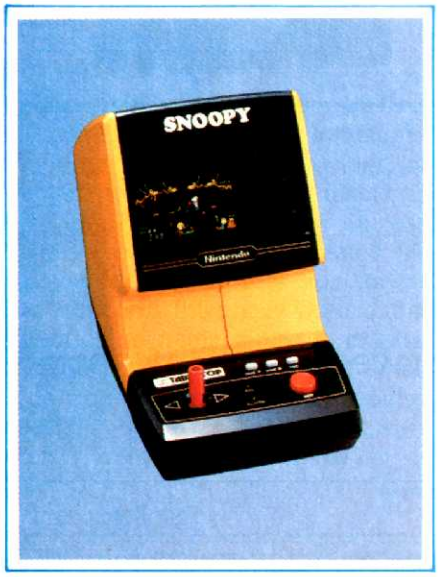
SNOOPY

Nintendo/$55

The world of Peanuts comes to life in a colorful table-topper that's bound to set youthful hearts pounding. They're all here: Charlie Brown, Schroeder, Lucy, Woodstock and, of course, Snoopy, in a musical fantasy designed just for fans of the United Feature Syndicate comic strip.

The game is straight-forward, uncomplicated and well suited for young arcaders. Schroeder hunches over his piano, tickling the keyboard to produce a veritable hail of notes floating into the zephyr. But Woodstock is sleeping in his nest, and his friend Snoopy must try to stop the rising notes so they won't awaken the yellow bird. Snoopy bounces back and forth, controlled by a miniature joystick, hitting each note with a hammer. If a tone gets past him, it awakens Woodstock. The angry little canary knocks Snoopy off his platform to the ground, and three such tumbles end the game.

SNOOPY (NINTENDO)



SNOOPY (NINTENDO)

Each contest begins with a clever animated sequence to set the flavor of the entertainment. Lucy, who is sleeping in the corner, wakes up, rushes to Schroeder, and like the mischievous little girl she's always been, kicks the tiny piano out of Schroeder's grasp. Then Lucy goes back to sleep, and Schroeder settles down to play a little Beethoven. Snoopy stands guard with his hammer in mid-screen, hopping between platforms to bop each rising note as it passes. This is an easy task, since the rising notes are color-coded to match the platforms. All the gamer has to do is see the color of the note that's floating toward the tree branch where Woodstock is sleeping, then jump to the same colored platform to hit the tone as it passes.

The graphics turn this child-pleaser into a work of gaming art. The characters are perfect miniature car-

toons, depicted against a dark screen so the colors stand out. The screen is lit by a skylight and the light filtering through the window at the top of the cabinet causes the game screen to glow with jewel-like colors.

The animation is accomplished by rather simple matrixing. For example, Lucy's dash across the screen to kick Schroeder's piano is done with just three images: Lucy leaning against a stump asleep; Lucy awake and standing, and Lucy kicking the piano, which flies into the sky as Schroeder falls over backward. But for all its simplicity, it's extremely effective, and accurately reflects the flavor of Charles Schultz' great comic characters.

There are two skill levels. The most difficult setting has Schroeder playing more notes, so Snoopy has to be quick in his hops across the four platforms to strike them as they rise. The game is housed in a handsome yellow table-topper that also contains a clock and alarm. The alarm sequence stars Charlie Brown ringing the bell.

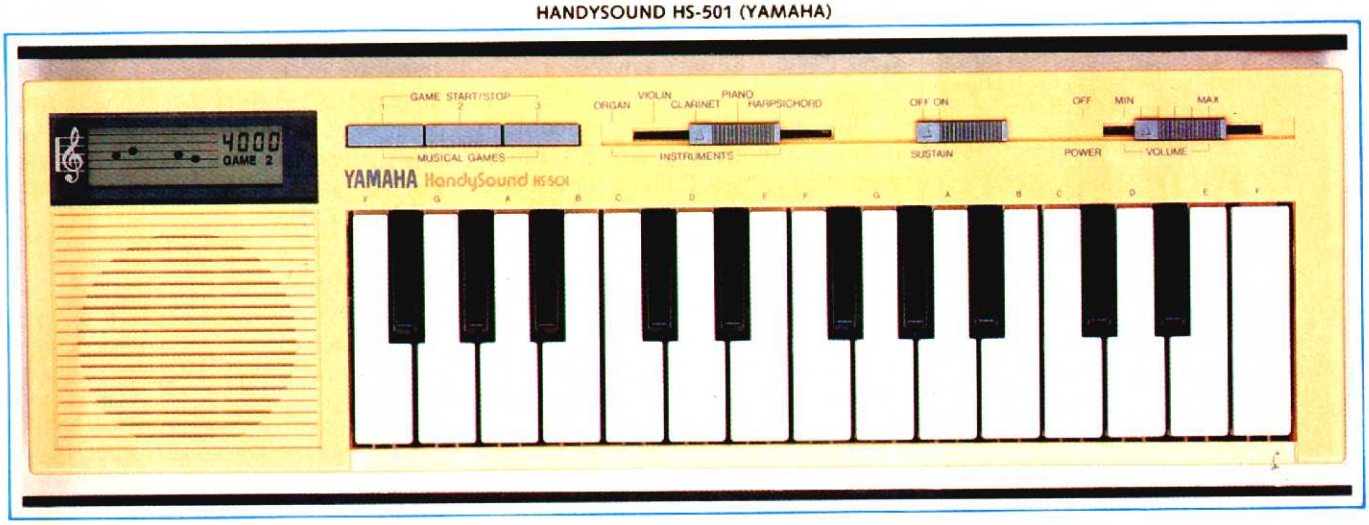
Snoopy is an easy game, suited for the young gamers who already love the clever mutt. There's just enough challenge to hold their interest without being so daunting as to discourage mini-arcaders.

SNOOPY: How It Plays

Choose Game A (easiest) or Game B (more difficult), and the game commences with an animated sequence, followed by Schroeder's serenade. Use the two-way joystick to move Snoopy back and forth across the four platforms in center screen, to strike the notes as they float into the air. Snoopy can only hit a note when standing on a platform of the same color; this makes it very easy to know where to move the canine star to line him up for the blow. The hit button swings Snoopy's hammer to destroy each note before it awakens Woodstock.

The unit uses two "C" batteries to power the animation. Illumination for the screen comes through the skylight, so it can be used in outdoor or normal room lighting, but neither the game nor the clock can be seen at night.

HANDYSOUND HS-501 (YAMAHA)



HANDYSOUND HS-501 KEYBOARD

Yamaha/$89.95

The holidays are coming; 'tis the season to be merry! To contribute to the joy, try filling the world with melody using Yamaha's **HandySound** keyboard. "Deck the Halls" will never sound jollier than when it's played on this pretty portable.

The *HandySound* is a delightful 25-note keyboard with five musical voices —organ, violin, clarinet, piano and harpsichord. The built-in 2-1/2 in. speaker can't compare to those found in professional keyboards, but it does the job and the tonal quality is remarkably bell-like for an instrument of this size (3½ by 12 in.)

The two-octave board has piano-style keys, though they're scaled down in size. This might be uncomfortable for people with large fingers but is no problem for kids or adults with small hands.

The *HandySound* plays up to four notes simultaneously—an unusual feature for keyboards in this price range. The resulting chords are quite beautiful.

As each note is played, it's shown on a treble clef on the LCD display, making this a valuable instructive instrument for students just learning to read or write music.

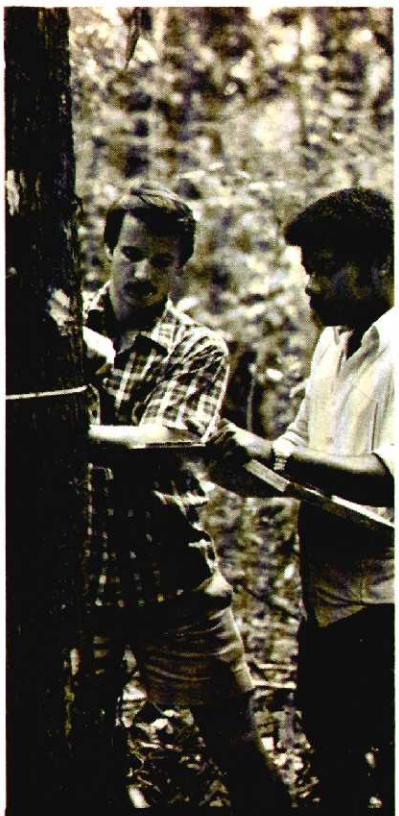
If the musician tires of tunes, the *HandySound* contains three built-in electronic games. "Keyboard Says" is a musical version of "Simon Says". The keyboard plays a note, displays it on the LCD screen, and then the gamer has to echo back the same tone. Each round adds one more note to the contest, to a maximum of 16.

"Keyboard Poker" is a sort of musical slot-machine. The *HandySound* plays a series of trills up and down the staff, and the gamer can stop the run at any note by pressing that key, to hold the tone on the display board. The object is to stop each run of notes at the same place, to get four-of-a-kind of a perfect score, a threesome, or pairs.

The last game, "Keyboard Invaders" is for arcader-musicians who like a little more action. The game starts with two notes displayed on screen, one controlled by the keyboard and the other by the gamer. By stroking the key displayed by the *HandySound*, the arcader moves his note to that line of the clef, then fires it toward the other to knock it down. Delay too long, and the keyboard shoots back.

The three games are pleasant enough, but extremely easy. They'll never win any high-skill awards. However, the object is not only entertainment. All of the games help would-be musicians learn to read notes, recognize tunes, and gain mastery of the proper finger placement.

The *HandySound* is housed in a buttercup-yellow plastic frame that



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wipes clean, and comes with a soft case for storage. An earphone jack makes it easy for midnight balladeers to play the blues without disturbing the rest of the world.

HANDYSOUND HS-501: How It Plays

The keyboard is powered by five AA batteries, or an optional power adaptor plugs into the chassis. An automatic power-off function turns the machine off after about five minutes of non-use to conserve energy.

Slides set the volume, turn the sustain feature off and on, and set the voice for the keyboard. Buttons select and start the three games, all of which are played by matching notes generated by *HandySound*.

SOCCER

Gakken/$29.95

One of the world's biggest contests is now one of the world's tiniest electronic games. Gakken turned **Soccer** into a single-screen LCD pocket sport that arcaders can take anywhere.

Only half the court appears on screen at a time. The game starts with the arcader's team in control of the ball, then switches the scene when the computerized opponents rush the action toward their own goal.

Four directional buttons control the movement of the on-screen players, while 'shoot' and 'pass' buttons send the ball from man to man, or toward the goal.

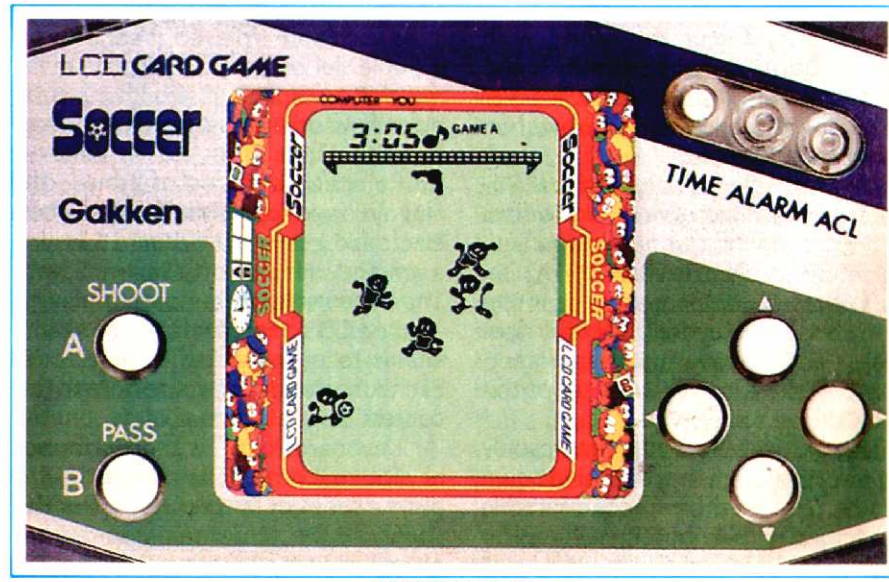
The computer-controlled team has it all together—they're definitely favored to win. This is especially true since the human team manager has to score 99 points to win, and the computer team only has to get points.

This is not a very impressive game to look at. It lacks the fancy touches seen in recent handheld games from the same publisher. Graphics are simple line drawings in black ink against a green-toned LCD screen. The computer players are in black jerseys, and the humans in green, so it's easy to tell them apart, but unfortunately they're not very pretty.

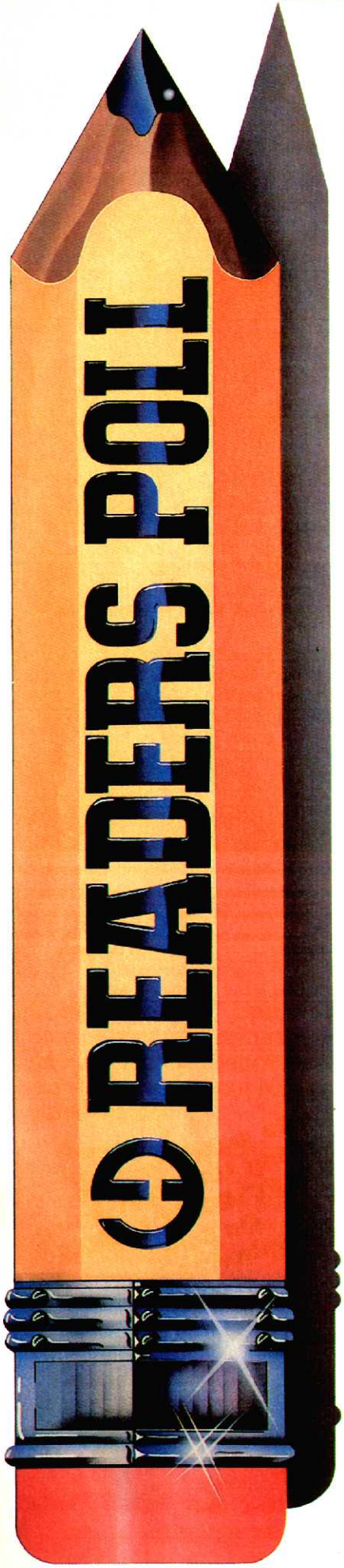
The action is fairly good, however, belying the unassuming appearance of the game. The players move rapidly; the buttons are easy to use and highly responsive. Players can grab the ball away from the other team either by tackling or intercepting passes, and there are even provisions for fouls in case of off-side plays. The computerized team is formidable, and it's a real contest to win a victory over the guys in black.

SOCCER How It Plays

The computer controls the team in black, and the human competes to score as many goals as possible before the computer racks up 99 points. The four directional buttons move players, or indicate the direction of a pass. The game starts with the human in control of the ball, and either team moving down the field toward the opposite end causes the scene to change automatically to reveal the home team's goalie.



SOCCER (GAKKEN)



Interaction between the readers and editors of **Electronic Games** helps make this a better magazine. The more we here at **EG** know about who you are and what you want to read, the better we can satisfy your needs and desires. That's why we run a Reader Poll in every single issue of this magazine. Rest assured that even though we protect the anonymity of every respondent to our survey, the editor personally reads each and every ballot received. And of course, this is also your ballot for casting your vote for the most popular videogames, computer game programs and coin-op arcade machines.

Please return this poll sheet — or a photocopy, if you prefer to keep your **Electronic Games** in perfect condition — to: **Electronic Games,** 460 West 34th Street, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

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Please rate each game *theme* from 1 (little interest) to 10 (great interest)

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Please rate your interest in the following game categories from 1 (don't like) to 10 (enjoy tremendously):

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Strategy ___ *Educational* ___ *Entertainments* ___

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Switch On! ___ *Programmable Parade* ___ *Strategy Session* ___
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My favorite article in this issue of EG was: _____

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NAME OF GAME	SYSTEM

My favorite videogame cartridges are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My favorite coin-op games are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Coming Attractions

THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO APPLE GAMES

The huge success of the IIc is turning the hacker's delight into the electronic game-lover's pride and joy. EG's magazine-within-a-magazine for January focuses on the breathtaking spectrum of games on disk for this popular computer system.

GAME OF THE MONTH: SPY VS. SPY

Two-player capability, beautiful graphics and a dynamite concept have carried **Spy vs. Spy** from the pages of *Mad Magazine* to the gaming screens of America. You'll get the inside story on how it was designed, a probing review and some hints on how to get the prizes and escape with a whole skin.

THE MUPPETS TAKE MICROPOLIS

Kermit, Miss Piggy and the rest of those lovable Jim Henson characters are the newest computer game stars. Get a first look at these innovative and stimulating edu-tainment titles, plus lots of inside information about the folks who made these Muppet programs a reality.

HOW TO BECOME A GAME DESIGNER

This is one of the most requested pieces ELECTRONIC GAMES has ever printed. For the first time, there's a guide packed with specific, helpful advice about how would-be game programmers can break into professional ranks.

GAMING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

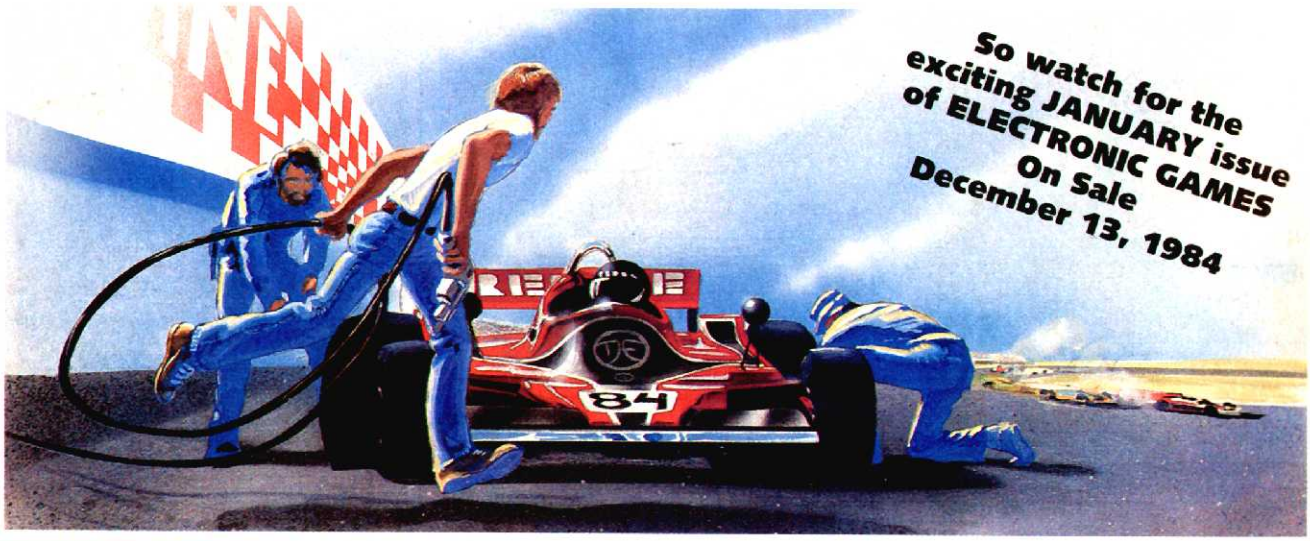
Electronic gaming isn't all tea and crumpets in Great Britain. This on-the-spot report reveals the triumphs — and tragedies — of the U.K. gaming scene.

LASER'S LAST STAND?

Are laser disk games a flash in the pan or the next big thing in gaming? Read this probing analysis of one of the most controversial topics in coin-op-land.

There'll be plenty of other exciting articles and features of interest to arcaders, plus these regular columns:

- ★ Passport to Adventure
- ★ Q&A
- ★ Inside Gaming
- ★ Arcade America
- ★ Software Showcase
- ★ Programmable Parade
- ★ Switch On!
- ★ New Products
- ★ Test Lab
- ★ Readers Replay
- ★ EG Hotline
- ★ Games Library
- ★ Stand-Alone Scene
- ★ Playing It Smart
- ★ In Control
- ★ Strategy Session
- ★ Insert Coin Here
- ★ Articles of War



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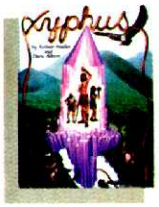

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